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ERRATA.

Page 35, 20th line from top for "1600" read *600*.

„ 42, 6th line from bottom, read *He was the Spiritual Father, and Olchon Church the Spiritual Mother of all the Baptist Churches.*

„ 44, 15th line from top, for "relieve it" read *relish it.*

„ 76, 16th line from top, for "enemies" read *mercies.*

THE
HISTORY
OF THE
Old Baptist Church at Olchon,
TOGETHER WITH THE
LIFE AND MARTYRDOM
OF
SIR JOHN OLDCASTLE,
THE LORD COBHAM;
AND THE LIFE OF
MR. YAVASOR POWELL.

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PREFACE.

 FEW years since I was invited to preach for the Baptist congregation of "Olchon," and during my visit there facts of so painful a nature came under my notice that my deepest sympathies were at once aroused, and I was fired with the resolution to do all in my power to help the already despairing people out of their difficulty.

They had for many years very sadly needed a place of worship. Though so far back as the year 1630 the Church dates, yet they had no chapel nor any kind of meeting-house to worship God in for the last one hundred and fifty years. Such were the straitened means of the little Church and congregation—consisting, mainly of shepherds and other very poor people—that they could not attempt the task of

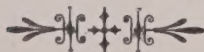
building a chapel. The Church had, more than once, fallen on bad times; many of the members—already few and feeble—left the neighbourhood; employment was hard to find and wages extremely low, so that the remnant left found itself altogether too weak to meet the responsibilities that would be necessarily incurred in the erection of a chapel. Thus the Baptist Church at Olchon remained at a standstill for upwards of a hundred and fifty years—a conspicuous mark for the shafts of ridicule, and a grievous eyesore to those whose dearest interests were the prosperity of Zion. So, after ten years' experience of worshipping in farm houses, cottages, darrens, and waysides—as the people had done for the long period of one hundred and fifty years—I was constrained to undertake the onerous task of erecting, to the glory of God, a soul-saving sanctuary, believing that christian friends, like-minded with myself, would rally around me, and that He who “came to seek and to save that which was

lost" would most assuredly add His all-enriching benediction.

Now I am happy to say that after labouring all these years for a remuneration less than £10 per annum, a neat and comfortable chapel has been completed—beautifully and conspicuously situated—and here the prayer of faith is offered, the songs of Zion are sung, and the glad tidings of salvation are proclaimed.

A few friends have aided nobly in the work: the Giver of every good gift, to whom be all the praise, will bless and reward them.

J. HOWELLS.



Dedication.

TO THE CONGREGATION ASSEMBLING AT
SALEM OLCHON CHAPEL.

DEAR FRIENDS,

AS the Fifteenth Anniversary of my settlement as your Minister happens to dawn with the appearance of this volume, it has occurred to me that its dedication to you would have something like fitness in it; and that whilst it would gratify me, it might be an act not altogether unacceptable to yourselves. The Work, as you will see, comprises the History of the Olchon Church from the time, perhaps, when some of the Apostles were living, until the year 1886, together with the Life and Martyrdom of Sir John Oldeastle, the Lord Cobham. The Author indulges the hope that this little book will be found useful, especially to the doubting, and the true Christian,—two classes that abound in all Congregations, and always require the tenderest treatment.

Grateful memories fill and fire the heart, when I review the Fifteen years we have lived and wrought together.

Our fellowship has been one of sweet harmony, and unbroken peace. When, from time to time, discordant spirits have come into our midst, they have soon found that their dolorous notes woke no echo, and they have departed. So may it ever be in the future! Heartily have you entered into every plan projected by me which promised the Salvation of man and the glory of God. With gratitude I remember, how readily some fifteen years ago you opened your houses for the preaching of the Gospel therein, in order to provide for the spiritual welfare of the people of the neighbourhood.

Other things you have done with the same noble generosity without parade or noise. Pardon me for recording this, but the memory of so many years works a gratitude in the heart that struggles for expression. When you and I shall be "sleeping under ground," and those of another generation shall be occupying our pulpit and our pews, such facts may supply a stimulus to our successors to do far greater works in the grand cause of human progress.

Fifteen years! only as yesterday to me in retrospect, but

"The leaves of memory seem to make a mournful rustling in the dark."—*Longfellow*.

Aye, 'tis "mournful" truly. Those years, short though they seem, have lifted me to the summit of life's solemn hill; and soon, downward, with a more cautious and faltering step, amid ever thickening shadows, I must

descend to the Vale where departed generations sleep in the awful silence of the past. "Time with its mighty strides will soon reach a future generation, and leave the present in death and forgetfulness behind it."

Adieu ! my dear friends, adieu ! Under the radiance of the Old Cross we first met, in its light we have been labouring together ; nearer and nearer may that Cross draw us to each other, to the holy universe and the ever-blessed Father !

JOHN HOWELLS.

SALEM OLCHON,

LONGTOWN,

May 25th, 1886.





A Brief Sketch of the Old Baptist Church at Olchon.

OLCHON is on the Welsh border. It is situated in the County of Hereford. The ruins of the oldest Chapel belonging to the Primitive Baptists stands on the banks of the swift-flowing stream from which the narrow and romantic Valley of the Olchon takes its name. There is another old Baptist Chapel in a state of rapid decay at Ilston, in the peninsula of Gower, in the County of Glamorgan. But the Mother Church doubtless was this one at the Gellis, as the old historians called it, from the woods that fringe the steep hill-sides between here and the picturesque little town familiarly known as the Welsh Hay. Near to the old ruin in the which now more than three hundred years ago our Baptist forefathers worshipped, on the hill above it, to the westward, is Capel-y-flin, or the boundary Chapel, so named because of the junction at this singular place of the three Counties of Brecknock, Monmouth, and Hereford; also the three Dioceses of Llandaff, St., David's, and Hereford. In

the dark ages of persecuting notoriety the Lollards, Waldenses, and Mennonites here found a little-known, concealed and secure asylum from the heresy-hunting, gospel-crushing, and havoc-making, minions of the Anti-christian and unspiritual Prelates of the aforementioned state-subsidised and secularly-supported Dioceses. Amid those wild solitudes, remote recesses, and secure fastnesses the pure word of God's lively oracles was preserved undiluted and uncontaminated. Not far from the gradually crumbling and rapidly-decaying Ancient Sanctuary stands another renowned and remarkable ruin, namely, the Herefordshire County Seat of Sir John Oldcastle, styled also as Lord Cobham. Sir John Oldcastle in all probability was baptised in the rivulet that rushes contiguously by the aforesaid rustic, secluded, and venerable old Chapel, in which afterwards he would be admitted by the Holy Elders and pious brethren into the Christian fellowship of the only true and scripturally constituted Apostolical Church.

Sir John owned a large estate in and around this valley. He was an especial favourite of Harry of Monmouth, the son and heir of Henry the 4th, in the fifteenth century. On the death of the old King he settled in London, so as to be near to the person of the new young King. Some suppose that he was the original of Falstaff, of Shakespeare's fat and foolish knight. Previous to his conversion he may have indulged rudely and dissolutely along with other young noblemen in the licentious and

disreputable sports of the roystering youthful heir-apparent. Whether the foregoing surmise be true or false, I feel historically assured of this, to wit, that he was highly esteemed, and greatly beloved of the frolicksome young royal Prince at one time. His espousal of the tenets and practices of the Lollards, somewhat estranged him from the favour and affection of the Kingly court of St. James's, and Windsor Castle Arundel, the Archbishop of Canterbury, aided and abetted by the other Popish Prelates, hunted his life to destroy it. They poisoned the mind and envenomed the heart of the young episcopally subservient Monarch against him. He sought to acquaint his quondam friend with the true state of affairs, but the creatures of the Archbishop prevented all personal communication between him and the Monarch. Instigated by the false charges and lying allegations of the cruel, crafty, and unchristian church dignitaries, Sir John was foiled in all his efforts at getting an interview with his former friend and confidential companion. Henry was made to believe that he defied him and meditated his dethronement. State-ecclesiastics have ever been infamous for both their evasion and perversion of the truth. A warrant was issued for the apprehension of the Lollard Peer and the Baptist Lord Baron (he prudently hastened down to his mansion, Olchon Court, until he could obtain an interview with his sovereign liege, the fickle-minded 'fifth Henry. Here, in his sylvan home, he was by a warrant from the

archbishop of the church at Lambeth, also seized, captured, and carried to London. Some authorities say that he was apprehended in North Wales, and removed from thence to the Tower of London. The tradition of his apprehension at his own mansion, in this sequestered wood-shaded glen, is as fresh to-day in the current traditions of the locality as if the occurrence had taken place less than fifty years ago. Conveyed to the metropolis, he was again arraigned before the Privy Council, with the Archbishop at their head, and tried, condemned, and sentenced to death. He was an uncompromising believer in the baptism of adults, on a personal profession of their faith by immersion. For a more detailed and complete sketch of the life and martyrdom of this great christian hero the reader is referred to another section of this book. Wickliffe, and his "poore preachers" also, were thorough Baptists, as his translation of the Bible plainly shows in his faithful version of the inspired page. Before Wickliffe, was Dr. Bradwardine, who flourished somewhere in the thirteenth century. He was one of the greatest scholars of his age. His principles were evangelical and scriptural. Bradwardine obtained his enlightened views and apostolical faith from "the poor men of Lyons," and the followers of Peter Waldo, who had emigrated hither from Provence and Picardy. The names of the Baptist sect, who were everywhere spoken against throughout the centuries have greatly varied, but the principles,

policy, and public profession has been precisely and invariably the same. The true "apostolical succession" is to be found here, and here only, in the history of the genuine Baptists. From Paul, downwards, to this day, they have never failed as a visible body of believers, witnessing for the truth as it is in Jesus, and in maintaining the like faith and practice, continuing constant, in season and out of season, in spite of bonds, imprisonment, the fiery stake, the headsman's axe, the hangman's cord, the assassin's sword, the damp, dark, dreary, and undrained dungeon, the racking tortures of the inquisition, and the perverted Romish church. There has been all along the blood-tinged ages of martyrdom an uninterrupted preservation of the primitive creed and ritual of the church of the Pentecost, so signally inaugurated in the upper room at Jerusalem.

There is no missing link in this celestial chain, from age to age of the remnant according to the election of grace. One of those important and super-eminent links in the "Catena" of Orthodox Christian Church history, is the ancient church and chapel of Olchon. It goes back behind Luther and the Protestant Reformation. The genuine Baptist church needed no reformation, for it never deformed or degenerated itself. Its unquenchable and sparkling transparency motto ever has been, and still is, the incorruptible word that liveth and abideth for ever.

Olchon is nearly midway between Abergavenny and Hay. It is situated in a narrow glen at the foot of the Black Hill on one side, and the Black Mountains on the other side. It is near to the Western Bank of the Olchon rivulet. The new chapel has been built on the eastern side of this impetuous stream, on an elevated spot not far from where stands the ancient sacred and venerable remains of the mediæval hallowed edifice. Here pure and undefiled religion was preserved in its primitive priority, and here the apostolical and pentecostal faith was enshrined in uncorrupted and unalloyed simplicity, and handed down to us in virgin simplicity and unpolluted integrity, when nearly the whole of Christendom besides was enshrouded in Popish perversity and anti-christian thralldom. Here was preserved intact and untampered the divine ark of the new Covenant of Grace.

The godly and god-like John Cann, of Amsterdam, on his fraternal visit to England in the reigns of Henry the Seventh and Eighth, found a harbour of refuge and an asylum of consecrated shelter here. Here the pious
* Pewry and the indomitable Vavasor Powel were baptised. Hither came the Rev. William Jones, the rector of Cilmaenllwyd in Caermarthenshire, and Mr. Griffith Howells, the freehold yeoman of Rhydsiacer, near Narberth, and were immersed in the crystalline waters hard by. From here, as from a fresh fountain of spiritual life, reissued forth the pure river of the water of life, to renew the face of the habitable earth on the subsidence

of the overwhelming deluge of pseudo catholic superstition that had inundated the churches of saints, and swept nearly all away the doctrines of grace and the discipline of pristine christianity from the Island of Great Britain, the Continent of Europe, and the whole of the wide, wide World.

The precious records of this unconsumably burning bush have been unfortunately lost. The Rev. Joshua Thomas, of Leominster, the Baptist historian of above a century ago, failed to find a single scrap, or the smallest fragment, though he carefully and diligently sought for them, of the archives of this illustrious golden candlestick.

It has been God's good-will to leave us in impervious gloom regarding its ancient date and its chequered career, excepting a faint gleam here and there, such as I have striven to collect from all available tradition and from written history. Previous to the erection of the old chapel, whose walls, blackened with the long lapse of the numerous centuries, as already stated, are still standing, the unbackslidden night-watchmen of an incorruptible and imperishable New Testament community, worshipped in the caves of the hills and the clefts of the rocks at the Daran goch and the Daran fawr.

A busy and an active imagination recreates, and a discursive, though reverential fancy reproduces, the antique forms and the celestially vivacious visages of the martyr heroes of primitive times, who would not

yield to the infernal foe, nor succumb to the satanic myrmidons of either the Pagan Priesthood of ancient or the apostate sacerdotalists of modern Rome and of an effete and emasculated christianity. Roman Consuls, Saxon Hane, Danish Viking, Norman Magnate, Plantagenet Prince, Tudor Tyrant, and Stuart Despot, have tried in vain to destroy and stamp out the intrepid loyal lieges of Prince Immanuel, our sole master, our high-exalted king, our anointed high priest, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. The undying passion of those fore-fathers above referred to for His adorable person, His crimson cross, His immutable truth, His faithful promises, His unimpeachable principles, His uncreated splendours, His ineffable charms, His peerless excellencies His unsullied glories—carried them victorious through every trial, hardship, temptation, and suffering, which they were called upon to endure for His name's sake. Nothing could shake their confidence in His truth, beauty, and goodness ; nothing could daunt their ardour in His cause, their fidelity to His royal commands, their flaming fervor in His service, their glorying in His changeless perfections. "They counted not their lives dear unto themselves that they might finish their course with joy."

During the time they were conserving and perpetuating the form of sound doctrine amid those rugged recesses and pastoral wilds, amid the bleating of the free-roving mountain sheep, the hoarse cry of the

bittern in the marshy and reedy pools, the plaintive cry of the cirlew, the shrill whistle of the plover, the harsh croak of the dusky raven, the gusty clamours of the raving tempest, and the monotonous roar of the flood-swollen torrents, the rest of the more thickly-inhabited localities of England and Wales were immured in cimmerician darkness, and enrapt in the gloomy folds of a base and well-nigh Christless superstition. Pilgrimages were being made triennially to the tomb of St. David on the shores of the Irish Sea. St. Winifred's Pool at Holywell was frequented by thousands who flocked thither to bathe their diseased bodies, amid the incantations of mercenary Priests, and the fond and foolish ceremonies of a paganised ritual, uttered in an alien tongue, and performed with postures and grimaces borrowed from the false worship of Heathen gods and goddesses. Here the Lord's Day was celebrated along with the simple and sedate observance of the Lord's Supper; hymn, and prayer, and sermon were gone through with the same pious routine which had prevailed from the memorable season when the upper room at Jerusalem was visited by "the powers of the world to come." It was a day of calm, devotional repose, from dawn to dewy eve, wherein they worshipped the Father in spirit and in truth. The Welshmen's candle of pious Vicar Prichard was lit from the lambent flame that unquenchably blazed on the hallowed Altar of Olchon Sanctuary. It was from "this Mountain of the

Lord" that the saintly rector of Llanddowror drew the inspiration that fed the fervid longings of his soul, for a fresh and a fuller consecration of Cambria to the pure service and acceptable worship of God. Yes! Here, amid the hanging woods, rugged rocks, and sylvan solitudes of the vale below, and frequently mist-wreathed mountains above, the Ark of the Lord was kept from utter destruction. What Noah's Ark was to the new world of a restored generation—What the Shepherd colony of Goshen was to the degenerated nations of the earth in the days of the ancient Pharaohs, and the worship of the slimy reptiles of the Nile—What the Tabernacle of Shiloh was in the days of Samuel the prophet—What the Temple on Salem's radiant hills was to the ancient Monarchies of the East, and their nature worship—What the later glories of the Jewish Theocracy were to the barbaric devotions and sensuous religions of Greece and Rome—such was the lowly edifice and its pious assembly at this divinely selected and sacredly sequestered spot. From here old Hengoed Church took its rise, Llanharan, Ilston too, I believe, Rhydwylym, Molleston, and Llangloffan. Here has been the perennial fountain, the temple threshold, from beneath which has rippled forth the crystal healing streams which to-day lave the lovely vales and flow over the lofty hills of our peerless principality. Let Olchon not be forgotten then, but held in everlasting remembrance, by the baptised believers in particular, of

our various commission Churches. What Mecca is to the Mussulman, St. Peter's at Rome to the Papist, Benares to the Hindoo, the grave of Confucius to the Chinaman, Thibet to the Buddhist, the Kremlin of Moscow to the Russian, such and more is, or ought to be, the venerable shade of old Olchon Chapel ruin, to the obedient and loyal believers of innumerable Apostolical ecclesiasts.

A memorial of permanent continuance ought to be erected here in the enclosed burying grounds of the New Chapel recently erected. A marble pillar with a suitable inscription should be placed before the New Temple, in loving memory and grateful recognition of our indebtedness to the heroic forefathers who, in this remote and classic region, kept undimmed the lamps of the christian tabernacle, and have been blessed and honored to hand down to us, their descendants, "the faith once delivered to the saints."

The friends of pure and undefiled religion at this romantic place deserve well of our faithful and flourishing churches, both in England and in Wales. They are but humble, homely shepherds, whose fleecy charges are pastured upon the short and meagre herbage upon the bleak and wild moorlands of the continuous black mountains. I hope the wealth-endowed Philemais, Chusans, Nicodemusses, Gamsses, and the Marys and Marthas of our churches, will open their hearts and their purses to bestow of their silver and of their gold

to liquidate the remaining liabilities of the good and worthy folk already referred to.

I cannot avoid thinking that some may cavil contentiously at the statements I have made, and captiously require of me more historic proof and stronger authentic evidence than what I have adduced, for the bold, fearless, and uncompromising assertions which I have made. I can assure my cautious, circumspect, and critical reader that for many years I have read all that has been published on the matters in question, regarding the origin, antiquity, and chequered fortunes of this ancient mother church, of most of the Welsh Baptist churches, and some of the Congregational assemblies as well. I have forgotten the names of several of my authorities, but I have retained the substance of the information obtained from them. Likewise, it has been my favourite habit to collect all the available traditional lore which I could come by, from old hoary-headed men and women, gifted with retentive memories, and fond of communicating all the information they could collect regarding ancient times, persons, events, and circumstances. What I have written, and yet may write, is the sum and substance therefore of much and most valuable traditional lore. On the wild, unfenced, moory mountain, above Olchon farm, Olchon stream, and Olchon dilapidated, crumbling, ecclesiastical shrine, is situated the boundary of the three counties already mentioned and of the three dioceses of Llandaff, St. David's, and Hereford, so that

it became for numerous centuries the alsatia or common resort of the persecuted saints of the Waldensian and Lyonnese churches in Great Britain. It was the woman's hiding place, as spoken of in the 12th chapter of the Revelation of John the Divine, the Patmos exile.

I should not omit mentioning that, whilst all other Protestant bodies of Christians date their origin back directly or indirectly, to Luther, Zuinguis, Calvin, Knox, and the other leading spirits of the sixteenth century Reformation, the Baptists alone can trace their unbroken, uninterrupted descent from the Parent Church, not of Rome, but of Jerusalem. Not from the reign of Constantine, or Henry the Eighth, and the Nicene or the Puritan Fathers, but from the Apostles and primitive Teachers, Pastors, and Evangelists of the first century of the Christian era. They never broke away from the Apostate Latin Church, but it schismatically and degeneratively broke away from them. To this day the Papal Church in her Church History and in the decretals of her arrogant and flagitious Pontiffs declares that there is no argument to be held, or discussion maintained with the incorrigible Waldenses and Albigences, the putative forefathers of the modern Baptists, save the argumentative debate of fire and sword. I have read it myself in a Papal Church History, lent me some years ago now, by a friendly Roman Catholic Clergyman belonging to the Order of "My Lady of Mount Carmel." We, as Scriptural Baptists, dwell alone amongst our own people,

"the friends of all and the enemies of none." The tongue of slander and the pen of calumny has been busy frequently with our names; lying tales and baseless libels have been repeatedly published by nearly all bodies of nominal Christians, in order to defame our reputation, blacken and vilify our characters. Rome and her minions, the Prelatical Hierarchy of State churchianity in all countries, and some Protestant dissenting writers even, have been most industrious in forging lying legends regarding our fellowship, "a Sect everywhere spoken against," as for instance the nudity of the Munzer, Matthias, Knipperdoller and their followers, both in Holland and in Germany. Luther, I grieve to state, detested us and encouraged the persecutions of the Dutch and other Baptists. Fox's Book of Martyrs is chiefly filled with the names and sufferings of baptised believers who refused to desecrate their infants with the unauthorised and unwarranted aspersion of apostolically unprescribed water. Fox, true somewhat to his name, has not had the candour and frankness to inform his readers that the great majority of his registered martyrs belonged to the despised and disparaged fraternity whose head quarters for ages was situate in the Valley of the Olchon. The scarlet thread that helps us to trace our gapless lineage backwards to the primitive Christians of earliest times, is the fact of their refusal to immerse any but professed personal believers in the Divine Verities. They made no com-

promise with apostacy. Their immutable motto was "No surrender" to any fond inventions or traditions of men. Their battle cry was "Y gwir yn erbyn y byd," that is, "the truth against the world." The word of God revealed in the Holy Scriptures was their rule of faith and code of discipline. Like the angels spoken of in the 103rd Psalm, "they did God's commandments, hearkening to the voice of His word." I have dwelt the longer upon this, because this was the reason they were brow-beaten, maligned, abhorred, and persecuted by all sects and parties of, alas! well nigh universally corrupted Christianity. Not that they believed there was any saving efficacy in believers' baptism by immersion, or that none other would be admitted to heaven except the members of Baptist communities. They presumed not—like the Pontifical churches—the Ultramontane adherents of "the Sacred College"—"The Latin Curia," to doom all outside the pale of their own communions to the covenanted mercies and retributive wrath of God. They conceded that liberty to others which they claimed for themselves. They were no bigots, neither were they fanatics; they taught the liberty of Gospel Faith, and left equity and judgment to the Omniscient searcher of hearts. They taught and believed in the sole infallibility of God's revealed word, and if others put another interpretation upon it than what they put upon it, they left the decision in the hands of a God of infinite righteousness, and illimitable know-

ledge. They taught the principles of civil and religious liberty, when all the world besides practised persecution against every other form of religious belief besides their own. They were and are the fathers of radical politics, and a free-trade christianity; coercion and physical force was hateful to their souls, for voluntarism was the very taproot of their church constitution and government. Believing that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump, they kept aloof from the least appearance of compulsion, dictation, and mere human authority.

I began with Dr. Bradwardine in the thirteenth century because of the limitation of the space at my disposal. I could have begun with the first century, and carried the succession of pastors and churches downwards to this, the end of the nineteenth century. This would have been a congenial task to my taste and inclination, but it would have been far beyond the scope of this summarised survey of the church, of the commission at Olchon, and elsewhere, from the days of Bradwardine, Chaucer, John Ball (or Beale), Wickcliffe, Sir John Oldcastle, the Lollards, Caxton, Tyndal, and John Cann, down to the time of the Protestant Reformation. The relics, as I said, of the old, sacred, and memorable fabric where scriptural believers met, and of Olchon Court—the once proud lordly seat of Sir John Oldcastle—are worthy of a visit.

If any should doubt or deny my advisedly daring and deliberate avowels, I challenge contradiction and defy

all hostile criticism. I take my stand on carefully sifted, unbiassed, and unprejudiced tradition; I have sought out amongst the posterity of the old members of Olchon, all that they, their lineal descendants, could tell me. I have perused carefully and exhaustively the chroniclers and narrators of Baptist worthies and Baptist antiquities, both with reference to their scriptural views, their few places of worship for generations, their devotional services and christian lives, and I can come to no other conclusion in the sequel, than what, that here was the redundant source of our present day progress, and eighteenth and nineteenth century prosperity. The little one has become, not a thousand, but myriads of thousands, and the small one a strong nation. Who dares despise us now? Who would venture to coin calumnies at present to bring us into contempt and derision? We are able hence to bind their princes with chains, and their kings with fetters of iron. I can hear, methinks, and near at hand as well, the musical roar of the incoming, shorewards sweeping, pentecostal tide of millennial, majestic, monumental splendour, when the now little known, and but slenderly appreciated renown of Olchon shall be redolent with reverence, and resplendent with coruscations of glory. The fame also then of Sir John Oldcastle, and the long unnoted Lollards—the mediæval Baptists—shall shine with unperishable and unquenchable lustre, amid the supernal brilliance and unparalleled sublimities of a day of beatific radiance,

and an age of supremely sabbatic serenity, transparent luminosity, and celestial exultation. The saints of the genuine Church of the Saviour's, in their might memories and resurrected remembrances, shall live and reign with Christ in the matured fulness of the dispensation of the spirit, in an universal penecostal effusion, for a thousand happy years.

Hail ! Olchon banks—divinely fair !
Thrice happy hours I've tasted there,
Exulting in the days gone by—
Grand days of Christian chivalry,
Where men of martyr mould have striven
To keep alive the spark from heaven :
Their bosoms burned with quenchless mood
(Prepared to seal it with their blood)
For what the will of God enjoined,
The truth in Calvary's mintage coined.
Not fond conceits of self-willed men,
Which lead straight down to Thopet's den.
The world the grace of God disowned,
Beneath the yoke of Rome it groaned ;
For those who made His truth their guide,
Unto each burning stake were tied ;
Some racked or broke upon the wheel,
Were made the keenest pangs to feel.
Oh ! days of darkness and dismay !
Praise be to God ye're gone away ;

The faith once given to the saints,
Which soothes the spirit's sore complaints,
Hath overcome the gates of Hell,
Long years that sought its might to quell.
Suggestions rife with racy thought
Refresh the mind on each loved spot
Where lived and wrought each hero saint
Who dared hell's worst, and scorned to faint.
Bold Cobham of Oldcastle, here
The word of God did so revere,
That to the death he played the man,
Whilst undeterred Faith's race he ran ;
And many another name as well
Long since who've gone Love's song to swell
With deathless might on yonder shore :
Faith's giants in the days of yore,
Unknown their honoured names below,
Their fruits remain their fame to show ;
Through heavenly blessing on their toil
We now are free from slavery's coil ;
On Britain's freedom sun-lit strand,
The prime and pink of every land.
Olchon ! thy name perfumes the page
Of history's roll from age to age,
For here no knee was bent to Baal,
Whilst hope in God did never fail,
That HE in love one day would spread
The truth which makes alive the dead ;

The wide world o'er endowed and blest
With Christ's redemptive heart-felt rest.
Roll on ye rippling waves ! roll on !
Rejoice and shout, the night is gone,
The light of liberty is shed
From Thuorist to St. David's head.
Christ's promised reign will soon begin
To heal man's woes and slay man's sins.

The kingdom of God cometh not by observation. False religions, which usually are hierarchical, carnally imposing, and majestical in their form and style, are well adapted to dazzle the outward eye, and captivate the sensuous imagination, but in the kingdom of Christ, which is not of this world, there is nothing but unaffected simplicity, decorous decency, and simple order. It is thus that state religions and prelatical institutions make more noise, and cause more attention and deference to be paid to them, than what is rendered to the unadorned and untitled homely conventicles of the faithful followers of Jesus of Nazareth. Associated with them there is no graduation of rank, no flaunting robes of office, no striking ceremonial, no perfumery, haberdashery, or stained glass windows "shedding a dim religious light." Thus in presenting a reflected picture of our primeval Church ancestry, there is nothing startling or fascinating to an unregenerate heart, in the inartistic aspects and physical phases of the dusky and ivy-clad Basilica, in the last and fast hastening decays

of the bye-gone centuries ; still, as Lord Byron pithily and profoundly observes in one of the graphic cantos of that princely poem of his, "Childe Harold"—

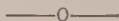
"There is given to the things of earth,
Which time has hallowed, a spirit's feeling ;
And where he hath lent his hand, but broke his scythe,
There is a power and magic in the ruined battlement
'To which the palace of the present must
Yield his pomp, and wait till ages are its dower."

Large rivers, such as the historic Nile, the mighty Mississippi, and the other renowned rivers of the globe, commence with tiny rills and insignificant fountain-heads. In like manner the obscure and necessarily clandestine convocations which continued through long ages of jealous intolerance and persecuting ecclesiastical tyranny to be held on this unobscure spot, have given birth to the colossal Baptist fraternities of the mammoth federal states of North America, and the lusty, stalwart, and thriving Baptist communities of Great Britain. Truly may we exclaim, "what hath God wrought?" "All the glory—all the glory—all the glory, Lord be thine."





Olchon, the Parent Church.



OLCHON is a name very well known to Welsh and English historians; it denotes a narrow vale in the Parish of Clodock, on the borders of Herefordshire, between Alergavenny and Hereford, and about 24 miles from the latter.

It is to the fact that Olchon appears to have been the birth place of Nonconformity that this neighbourhood owes its great notority.

There is evidence that there were Baptists in Olchon at a very early period, and a probability that there were Baptists there even while some of the Apostles were living. An origin so remote as that cannot be fixed to other religious bodies, because those bodies arose long afterwards.

It is an historical fact that Popery entered the principality in the person of Austin the Monk, about the year 600 of the Christian Era. The Church of England was established in the principality as the National Church in the year 1533 by Henry the VIII. and his counsellors.

The first Independent Church was formed in the year 1639, by Mr. Wroth, who left the National Church and established an Independent Congregation at Llanfaches, Monmouthshire. Mr. John Wesley, the founder of the religious denomination bearing his name, frequently preached in Wales, but there was no Church formed in connection with Wesleyanism before the year 1771, when one or two Wesleyan Churches were formed in the County of Glamorgan, the members of which spoke English. In the year 1735 or 1737, Mr. Howell Harris began that work out of which arose the Calvinistic Methodists. Their first association meeting was held in Watford, in 1743, but they were not formed into, or acknowledged as, a religious body, separate from their Mother Church, until the year 1811. Hence, there is nothing to prevent the historian, were it of any importance to do so, from fixing the year, the month, the week, or even the day, when all other religious denominations, from the Church of Rome downwards, had their origin in the principality. But the origin of the Baptists there cannot be fixed so exactly.

An ancient account, which has been very widely received, and which is confirmed to a large extent by historical facts (See "History of Nonconformity in Wales," by T. Rees), states that Brân Fendigaid (Breuno, the blessed), one of the Princes of Wales, was a Christian, and that he with other Christian friends, on their return from Rome, about the year 58 or 60 of the

Christian Era, brought with them ministers of the Gospel, and these good men were the first who preached the good tidings to the people of Olchon and the principality.

Brân, the Prince, is said to have been brought to embrace Christianity while a captive in Rome, by means of the Roman Christians, and we know what their sentiments were from what the Apostle Paul says in Rom. vi., 3. He says that they had all been baptised—immersed into Jesus Christ; that they had been baptised into his death; that they were walking in newness of life; that they had been immersed with Christ, and had thus yielded a personal and willing obedience to Christ in the Ordinance. That was the character of the Church from which Brân, the Prince, came, and from which his Christian companions received their religious instructions.

Every historian of any mark admits the fact that the first Christians of this country were Baptists; and all the early historians bear their united testimony to the fact that none of the people of the principality baptised infants prior to the visit of Austin, in the year 1600. Austin, as the special messenger of the Pope, required three things from the Christians of Britain:—To observe the Feast of Easter; to admit the Pope to be Head of the Church; and to yield up their children to be baptised according to the custom of the Church of Rome. It should be borne in mind that Austin asked to have the children baptised (immersed), and not to have water sprinkled upon them; the Church of Rome was not

Popish enough for sprinkling then. After Austin had baptised King Ethelbert in the River Swede, near York, together with ten thousand of his subjects, he came to hold an assembly on the borders between England and Wales, for the purpose of converting the Welsh, and inducing them to receive the new doctrine. The Welsh Baptists, however, opposed him, and utterly rejected his proposals. In consequence of this refusal the Welsh Christians suffered much persecution; but they still grasped with a firm hand the great truths of the Gospel.*

The fact that the early Christians of this part of the Kingdom were Baptists is confirmed by the accounts which states that Lucius the King was baptised when about middle age; and that about the same period many of the foremost men of the country embraced Christianity, and followed the example of their King in submitting themselves to the Ordinance of Baptism.

The historians give the names of many men of note and talent who were Baptist ministers prior to and at the time when Austin made his visit; amongst these we find the names of Aaron, Alban, Dewi, Daniel, Demcanus, Dynawd, Dyfrig, Ffaganus, Gildas, Julias, Paulin, and Teilo. Dynawd was at that time the President of the College at Bangor, and was chosen to argue with Austin on the question of Baptism, in an assembly of Welsh

* History of the Church, by Dr. Benedict, of America. Fuller and Fabian in Crosby, vol. ii.

ministers, held on the borders of the county of Hereford (probably Olchon).

One esteemed author refers to the period under consideration in the following terms:—"The Christians in England did not know anything of Christianising or baptising their children prior to the coming of Austin, in the year 597; and to us it appears plain that he brought (infant baptism) not from Heaven, but from Rome. But though the subjects of baptism began to be changed, still the mode was preserved in the national Church for a thousand years longer, as baptism was administered by immersion. From the coming of Austin here the Church in this island was divided into two—the old and the new. The old or Baptist Church kept the primitive principles, but the new embraced infant baptism, and a host of other superstitious things belonging to Rome." *

Another well-known author says:—"We have every reason to believe that the Welsh Baptists had their assemblies, and that Dyfrig, Illtyd, and Dynawd were leading men amongst them long before Austin came to make his attempt at converting them to Popery, in the assembly held on the borders of England in the year 600." †

Thus we have the national traditions, as well as the

* History of the Baptists, by D. Jones, p. 48.

The Early Baptists, by Taylor.

† Davies's history of the Welsh Baptists, p. 187.

facts of history, plainly teaching us that the Christians of Olchon and Wales, for at least the first six centuries of the Christian era, were baptised believers—immersed on a personal profession of faith in the Son of God. There is not a single instance on record of an infant being baptised in Wales prior to the first year in the seventh century, nor was immersion exchanged for any other use of water for a thousand years after this period.

During the time known as “The Dark Ages,” when Popery was the established religion of Wales, we are unable to follow regularly the history of the baptised churches there, but that churches composed of those who had trusted and had been immersed existed there during that trying period—that they held fast to their first principles, and that they administered the ordinance according to the apostolic plan—we have every reason to believe, for when the dawn of the Reformation broke forth in this country, we find Baptists existing even at that time in secluded valleys and unfrequented districts, such as Olchon, on the borders of Hereford, and other localities westward. These Baptists made their appearance—not as a new sect composed of those who had formed part of, and had determined to come out of, some existing body, as the Church of England in the time of Henry VIII. came out of the Church of Rome, and as at a later period the Independents, Wesleyans, and Calvinistic Methodists came out of the Church of

England to form new sects. It is proved beyond dispute that the manner in which the Baptists of the sixteenth century appeared in this country was as a religious body which, till then, had been existing in obscurity—as a body whose members had been compelled for a time to hide themselves in caves, darrens, and among rocks, to avoid the cruel persecutions of the preceding period.

These Baptists did not perhaps constitute regularly formed bodies, such as we now call regular Baptist Churches, but there was a regular congregation of Baptists meeting constantly in a place called Olchon, under the ministry of Mr. Howell Vaughan, in the time of Charles I. This Church may not have been regularly and formally incorporated according to the meaning we now attach to the terms, but still it was a regular congregation, meeting constantly, and enjoying the uninterrupted ministry of the godly Mr. Vaughan. The Rev. Joshua Thomas, the indefatigable author of “The History of Baptists in Wales,” obtained documentary evidence of this many years ago, in the locality in which the Church met. Besides, he was the settled minister to the Church at Olchon from 1746 to 1754.

At that time the congregation was entirely Welsh, but by this time the English language is used by all the inhabitants. Joshua Thomas states that it was the general tradition among the old people at that time that Olchon and the neighbourhood was the birth place of the first Nonconformities of the principality. This appears

very probable, from the fact that so many of the worthies of Wales were connected with the district, such as Dr. Thomas Bradwardine, a well known divine in the first part of the 14th century; Walter Brute, one of the disciples of Wicliffe, and one that may be well considered the first Reformer among the Welsh, after the country was overwhelmed by Popery. Sir John Oldcastle, the Earl Cobham, a firm defender of the doctrine of Wicliffe, 450 years ago, lived in the neighbourhood. The eminent William Tyndale, who gave the first printed New Testament to England; John Penry, M.A., who laboured, suffered, and died testifying to "the truth as it is in Jesus;" Sir William Cecil, Earl Burleigh, the most renowned statesman in Europe, if not in the whole world, in his day; Hugh Evans, M.A., pastor of Broadmead Church, Bristol; and Caleb Evans, D.D., his successful successor. Upon the whole, it appears more than probable that the first Nonconformists among the ancient Britons, and the first congregation of Baptists after the Reformation, were in Olchon and the neighbourhood, and therefore here we find the first Protestant Nonconformist.*

And while we consider that Olchon may, upon the whole, be looked upon as the birth place of the first Reformers, the first Nonconformists, and the first Baptists among the Welsh, the district must be deemed a consecrated spot by many. It is certain that a church was gathered here as early as the year 1415, and probably

* Joshua Thomas, History of Welsh Baptists, p. 134.

much earlier. Sir John Oldcastle, the Lord Cobham, had a chapel in or attached to his house during the last years of his stay in Olchon, and he was taken from the neighbourhood, and suffered death in St. Giles' Field in 1418. It would not do in those days for the Church to meet in the same place every Sunday. Their enemies were numerous, and their persecutors would let them rest neither day nor night. Sometimes these early Christians would meet together in a secret spot on the Black Mountains; at another time in the woods and darrens, and "caves of the earth." It was dangerous then for these saints to worship God according to their convictions, even in the houses of their friends. On one occasion, on a Sabbath morning, a few of the godly people from Olchon were wending their way towards the Black Darren, to hold a service, when they were overtaken by their persecutors, who demanded of them where they were going to. The reply which they gave was that their "Elder Brother" was dead, and that his will was to be read that morning, and they wished to hear it, as there was a legacy in it for them. Upon hearing this statement they were allowed to go on their way. Little did the enemy think that Jesus Christ was the "Elder Brother," and that the New Testament was the will which was to be read that morning. It was useless to think of making and fixing a pulpit, or building a chapel in those dangerous dark days of persecution.

An interesting fact of these persecuting times is

narrated by Mr. Joshua Thomas, and we relate it here, because, among other reasons, it points to Olchon as the Mother Church. Dr. Calamy mentions Mr. William Jones, among the Clergy who were ejected from the Established Church in Carmarthenshire. He was cast into Carmarthen Castle for preaching the Gospel; there he associated with some who held Baptist views, and he became convinced that "Believers' Baptism" was the only Scriptural Baptism; but he concealed his conviction and change of mind on the subject while he remained in prison. By some means or other he obtained his freedom, and he was determined to secure the answer of "a good conscience" by being baptised according to the New Testament rule. In order to obtain "a fit man" to officiate, he was advised to go to Olchon to be baptised, and it is very probable that Mr. Thomas Watkins was the administering minister. This took place about the year 1665 or 1666. In 1668 Mr. Thomas Watkins and Mr. William Pritchard went to form a Church of those believers baptised by Mr. William Jones. So that under the "Great" and "Good" Shepherd he was the Spiritual Mother of all the baptised Churches in the principality of Wales and the county of Hereford.*

There is good reason to believe that a Baptist Church existed in Olchon at a very early date. According to the traditions of the place, the Church there is five hundred years old. Tombstones have been dug up in the burial

* Joshua Thomas's Baptist History, page 153, 154.

ground belonging to the Church bearing date 1387. How long the Church had been then in existence, there are no records to testify. Sir John Oldcastle lived in the neighbourhood, and worshipped with the Baptists as as early as the year 1391. (*Bishop Bala, page 11*).

There were many Baptists in Olchon in Queen Mary's reign. Some of them endured painful imprisonment. Some passed to heaven through the fire. Even the venerable John Fox kept back information respecting these Baptist martyrs; but "their record is on high."

We regard such places as Olchon consecrated to the Service of God, as the loveliest in our country. They add beauty and value to the estates around them; for they are spots made sacred and dear by alters for prayer, by Songs of praises; by the preaching of the Gospel, and by holy communion in remembrance of the death of the Lord Jesus.

We have also here around us a very extensive convenient green spot for a burying ground; but we must trim it, garden and wall around it, and must at once make the necessary arrangements. We now wish they had been made long ago by our forefathers. It would have been a convenience of great gain to this parish, as it is ten miles long, had it been done a hundred years ago. In that case there would have been here, at this time, an old Cemetery around the "New Chapel;" but there were probably hinderances in the way which we cannot now comprehend. Our old Church-

yard is not only inconvenient to some of the borders of the parish, but is now very full—to families in those distant borders, funerals occasion labour that generally takes all the hours of the day. It would be an additional convenience to some of our neighbours if there were a burying ground in the Crasswall end of the parish, so that families could suit their convenience when burying their dead. The distance of some families from the Church grave-yard occasioned the cost and trouble of providing a dinner at funerals. Some come punctually at the hour announced, but others were very slow; and the slow ones to start were also very slow over this dinner; not because of any weakness of their digestive organs, but because they had long fasted in order to enjoy the “funeral dinner,” and greatly did they relieve it. Tea-ladies and carvers were generally kept in active work for about four hours; and it was often dark before the funeral Service was over, chiefly owing to the dinner ceremonials.

It is therefore an advantage to have grave-yards at a convenient distance, in order to avoid such costly carnal ceremonials. An occasional leisure hour around the graves of our departed friends might be sanctified for our good. Meditations over their sepulchres would benefit the heart by inciting it to contemplate the glorious scenes and services of the happy world beyond the grave.

We can say that the dead will sleep in this new

cemetery as soundly and as safely as they would in any old burying-ground; and we can further say, that they shall be called to awake and rise in good time on the morning of the great resurrection day—for the sound of the trumpet of that day will be so strong as to awake the dead within all the grave-yards of the world in the same moment.

The weeping friends who leave their dear relations and friends to sleep here will yet remember that they are gone before to warm the bed for them and others. They need not fear that they are to be there alone. They shall soon have many companions. It is a strong consolation to us when bidding farewell to those we love and esteem to know that they were dedicated, body and soul, to that Saviour who himself perfumed the grave, and arose as the “first fruits of them that sleep.” They know where to look for instruction and solace. We have an opportunity now to comfort them more fully. It is an advantage on a funeral occasion like this that we are not fettered to “forms” long or short. We are at liberty here in this new grave-yard, to be brief or to enlarge, as the occasion may require.

NAMES OF MINISTERS OF OLCHON CHURCH.

1.	MR. JOHN PENRY	..	..	DIED	1593
2.	MR. HOWELL VAUGHAN	..	..	„	1653
3.	MR. WALTER PROSSER	..	..	„	1672

4.	MR. JAMES HUGHES	..	..	„	—
5.	MR. THOMAS WATKINS	..	..	„	1694
6.	MR. THOMAS PARRY	..	..	„	1709
7.	MR. JOHN RHYS HOWELL	..	..	„	1692
8.	MR. HOWELL WATKINS	..	..	„	1700
9.	MR. THOMAS POWELL	..	..		—
10.	MR. JOSEPH PRICE	..	..	„	1721
11.	MR. THOMAS PRICE	..	..		—
12.	MR. JOHN GILBERT	..	..		—
13.	MR. REES WILLIAMS	..	..	„	1759
14.	MR. WILLIAM WILLIAMS	..	..	„	1771
15.	MR. JACOB REES	..	..	„	1772
16.	MR. JOHN POWELL	..	..	„	1743
17.	MR. JOSHUA ANDREWS	..	..	„	1793
18.	MR. GEORGE WATKINS	..	..		—
19.	MR. NOAH DELAHAY SYMONDS	..			—
20.	MR. JAMES PERROTT	..	..
21.	MR. JAMES PRICE	..	..
22.	MR. JOSHUA THOMAS, from 1746 to 1754.				

AN EXTRAORDINARY INSTANCE OF DIVINE INTERPOSITION.

The following remarkable narrative was inserted in Dr. Rippon's Baptist Register for 1802, p. 1097. Dr. Samuel Stennett, on whose authority it was related, had it from Dr. Joseph Stennett, his father, so that its truth is beyond a doubt:—

Dr. Joseph Stennett, married a lady in Wales, in consequence of which he resided there several years, and preached with great acceptance to the Baptist congregation in Abergavenny. There was a poor man in that congregation, generally known by the name of Caleb: he was a collier, and lived among the hills between Abergavenny and Hereford, in or near Olchon. He had a wife and several children, and walked eight or ten miles every Lord's Day to hear the doctor, the weather seldom preventing him. He was a very pious man, and his knowledge and understanding were remarkable, considering the disadvantages of his situation and circumstances. The doctor was very partial to him, and pleased with his conversation.

One winter there was a severe frost, which lasted many weeks, and not only blocked up Caleb's way to meeting, so that he could not possibly pass without danger, but prevented him from working for the support of himself and family. The doctor and many others were much concerned lest they should perish from want. However, as soon as the frost had broken up Caleb appeared again. The doctor saw him from the pulpit, and as soon as the service was ended went to him, and said, "O, Caleb, how glad I am to see you! How have you done during the severity of the weather?" He cheerfully answered, "Never better in my life; I not only had the necessaries, but lived upon dainties during the whole time, and have some still remaining, which

will serve us for some time to come." The doctor expressed his surprise, and wished to be informed of the particulars. Caleb told him that one night, soon after the commencement of the frost, they had eaten up all their stock, and had not one morsel left for the morning, nor had they any human probability of getting a new supply, but he found his mind quite calm and composed, relying on a gracious God, who neither wanted power nor means to supply his wants. He went to prayer with his family, and then to rest, and slept soundly till morning. Before he was up, he heard a knock at his door, and on going to see who was there, saw a man standing with a horse, loaded, who asked if his name was Caleb. He answered in the affirmative, and the man immediately desired him to help to take down the load. Caleb asked what it was. He said provisions. On his inquiring who sent it, the man said he believed God had sent it, and no other answer could he obtain. When he came to examine the contents he was struck with amazement at the quantity and variety of the articles. There were bread, flour, oatmeal, butter, cheese, salt, meat and flesh, neat's tongue, &c., &c., which served them throughout the frost, and some remained to that present time.

The doctor was much affected with the account, and mentioned it in all companies where he went, in hope of finding out the benevolent donor. His attempts, however, were all in vain, till he went, about two years

afterwards, to visit Dr. Talbot, a noted physician, in the city of Hereford. Dr. Talbot was a man of good moral character, and of a very generous disposition, but an infidel in principle. His wife was a godly woman, and a member of the Baptist Church at Abergavenny, but could not attend very often on account of the distance. Dr. Stennett used to go and visit her now and then, and Dr. Talbot, though a man of no religion himself, always received Dr. Stennett with great politeness; and Dr. Stennett generally stayed a night or two at his house when he went. While they were conversing very pleasantly one evening, Dr. Stennett, with a view of introducing something entertaining and profitable, spoke of the great efficacy of prayer, and instanced the case of poor Caleb. As he was relating the affair, Dr. Talbot smiled, and said, "Caleb! I shall never forget him as long as I live." "What! did you know him?" said Dr. Stennett. "I had but very little knowledge of him," said Dr. Talbot; "but by your description I know he must be the same man you mean." Dr. Stennett was now very anxious to hear what account Dr. Talbot had to give of him, upon which Dr. Talbot freely related the following circumstances.—During the summer previous to the hard winter above mentioned, he was riding on horseback for the benefit of the air, as was his usual custom when he had a leisure hour, and generally choose to ride among the hills, it being more pleasant, rural, and romantic. A few farmhouses were dispersed

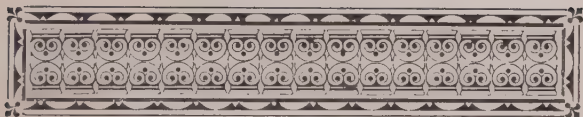
here and there, and a vast number of little cots. As he was riding along, he observed a large number of people assembled in a barn, and his curiosity led him to ride up to the barn-door, to learn the cause of their assembling. He found, to his great surprise, that there was a man preaching to a vast number of people, and he stopped till the sermon was ended. He observed that the people were very attentive to what the preacher said, and one poor man in particular attracted his notice. He had a little Bible in his hand, and turned to every passage of Scripture the minister quoted. Dr. Talbot wondered to see how ready he was for a man of his appearance in turning to the places, and likewise noticed that his Bible was full of dogs'-ears, that is, the corners of the leaves were turned down very thick. When the service was over, he walked his horse gently along, in order to observe the people, and the poor man whom he so particularly noticed happened to walk by his side. The doctor entered into conversation with him, asked many questions concerning the meeting and the minister, and found the poor man to be more intelligent than he could have expected. He inquired also about himself, his employment, his family, and his name, which he said was Caleb. After the doctor had satisfied his curiosity, he rode off, and thought no more about Caleb, till the great frost came on the following winter. He was one night in bed, but could not tell for certain whether he was asleep or awake, when he thought he heard a voice

say—"Send provision for Caleb." He was a little startled at first, but concluding it to be a dream, endeavoured to compose himself to sleep. It was not long before he imagined he heard the same words repeated, but louder and stronger. He then awoke his wife, who was in a sound sleep, and told her what he had heard; but she persuaded him that it could be no other than a dream, and she soon fell asleep again. The doctor's mind, however, was so much impressed that he could not sleep. He turned and tossed himself about for some time, till at last he heard the voice, so powerful, saying—"Get up, and send provision to Caleb"—that he could resist it no longer; he got up, called his man, and bade him bring the horse. He then went to his larder, and stuffed a pair of panniers as full as he possibly could with whatever he could find, and having assisted the man to load the horse, bade him take that provision to Caleb. "Caleb," said the man, "what Caleb, sir?" "I know very little of him," said the doctor, "but his name is Caleb; he is a collier, and lives among the hills; let the horse go, and you will be sure to find him." The man seemed to be under the same influence as his master, which accounts for his telling Caleb "God sent it, I believe."

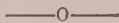
Thus faithfully does the blessed Redeemer keep His word, that those who make His glory their chief end shall not lack earthly things. "Seek ye first," He said, "the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all

these things" (food, drink, and clothing) "shall be added unto you." Matt. vi., 33. The neglect, therefore, of His service, instead of being necessary at any time to the supply of our need, is the very thing which renders it uncertain. The most godly may be reduced sometimes to straits. The Apostle Paul says he was instructed both "to abound and to suffer need," Phil. iv., 12; but in the very chapter in which he records this he states also that his need has been supplied, and assures those who had ministered to his necessities, "my God shall supply all your need, according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus," Phil. iv., 19. "Trust in the Lord and do good, and verily thou shalt be fed." Ps. xxxvii., 3.





The Life and Martyrdom of Sir John Oldcastle.



WE are told that not less than seven cities contended for the honour of having given birth to one of the great poets of antiquity. We have a similar rivalry respecting the birth-place of Sir John Oldcastle. Several places on the borders of Wales dispute the right of having given birth to this remarkable man, but not more than two of these are worthy of notice, viz., Oldcastle in the parish of Almely, Herefordshire, and Oldcastle beneath the shadows of the Black Mountains in Monmouthshire. Tradition preponderates in favour of the latter.

Sir John was born in the year 1360, in a castellated mansion, which derived the appellation Oldcastle from the fact that it was built on the site of an old Roman camp. This is true of Oldcastle in Monmouthshire. Some historians say that this appellation was given to Sir John's native place from the name of its distinguished owner, but this is inconsistent with the fact that Sir

John Oldcastle was a Welshman. He was known in Wales by the cognomen, "Sion yr Hendy," which is undoubtedly a Welsh name. The early life of Sir John is involved in great obscurity, and destitute of any authentic details. It was unknown even to Bale, who wrote a full account of his trial and death as early as the year 1544; but his history from the year 1391 till his death is the history of Lollardism in England. The greater part of Sir John's history would have been shrouded in darkness were it not for the light that shone upon it from the "morning star of the Reformation."

At Olchon Sir John Oldcastle had a chapel in or attached to his dwelling-house. And this beautiful but secluded valley near the head of the Black Mountains, is one of the oldest places on record in connection with the Baptist denomination, celebrated as a place of resort of eminent men, poets and statesmen. But the brightest gems that adorn its history are its great and noble preachers. In its valley, darrens, and upon its mountains, are the footprints of the men of God, who published with voices loud and clear as silver trumpets, "the unsearchable riches of Christ." And let it not be forgotten that this rich inheritance is a legacy of the great Sir John Oldcastle and others of the past. The neighbourhood of Olchon has been associated with the names of the great spirits of bygone time; and who amid sorrows and tears sowed the seed of a glorious harvest. It is fair to state that Sir John Oldcastle never

attempted to conceal his principles : and his preaching was not without the best effect even on those who then did not share in his opinions. But for this good work he was pursued by his persecutors upon the mountains of Monmouthshire, Breconshire, and Herefordshire, from place to place ; and when seized he was sent to London and confined to the Tower. But while imprisoned there he sent out secretly to his friends, who, at his request, wrote the following bill and had it posted up in different parts of London, that the people might not believe the slander and lies which his enemies, the bishops, servants, and priests, had scattered abroad respecting him :—“For as much as Sir John Oldcastle, Knight, and Lord Cobham, is untruly convicted and imprisoned, falsely reported and slandered among the common people by his adversaries, that he should otherwise both feel and speak of the Ordinances of the Church otherwise than was written in the confession of his belief, which was indented and taken to the clergy, and so set up in divers places in the city of London. Known be it here to all the world, that he never since varied in any point therefrom, but this is plainly his belief, that all the Ordinances of the Church be profitable and expedient also to all them that shall be saved, taking them after the intent that Christ and His true Church hath ordained.”

A copy of this writing was sent to Thomas Arundel, the Archbishop of Canterbury. Subsequently a copy was also sent from Maidstone, October the 10th, 1413—

the same year—to Richard Clifford, the Bishop of London, and he sent another copy enclosed in his own letters to Robert Mascall, a Carmelite Friar, who was then Bishop of Hereford, in Wales. The other Bishops did in like manner within their Dioceses. After the Archbishop had read the bill of his condemnation before the whole multitude, Sir John Oldcastle said with a most cheerful countenance—"Though ye judge my body, which is but a wretched thing, yet I am certain and sure that ye can do no harm to my soul, no more than could Satan upon the soul of Job. He that created that will of His infinite mercy and promise save it. I have these in no manner of doubt. And as concerning the articles before rehearsed, I will stand to them even to the very death, by the grace of my eternal God." Then turning to the people, with outstretched hands, he said with a loud voice—"Good Christian people, for God's love be well aware of these men; for they will else beguile you, and lead you, blindlings, into hell with themselves. For Christ saith plainly unto you—"If one blind man leadeth another, they are alike both to fall into the ditch."

After this Sir John fell upon his knees, holding up both his hands, and, looking towards heaven, thus before them all prayed for his enemies: "Lord God eternal, I beseech Thee for Thy great mercy sake to forgive my persecutors, if it be Thy blessed will." And then he was delivered to Sir Robert Morley, and so led forth

again to the tower of London. Thus ended that day's work.

The bishops and priests after this were held in much obloquy both by the nobility and by the commons, partly because they had so cruelly handled the good Lord Cobham, and partly again because his opinion, as they thought at that time, was perfect concerning the Sacrament. As they feared this would grow to further difficulty and inconvenience to them, they consulted together, and ultimately contrived and decided upon another plan of dealing with him, somewhat contrary to the one on which they acted before. They caused it by-and-bye to be blown abroad by their fed servants, friends, and babblers, that the Lord Cobham had become a good man, and had humbly submitted himself in all things unto Holy Church, completely changing his opinion concerning the Sacrament. And to make this appear the more certain and beyond all doubt, they counterfeited an abjuration in his name that the people might not credit his opinion simply because they had heard it from him before, and that they might create the more awe in their minds towards themselves, who had the power to condemn and subdue so great a man. "This is the abjuration," they said, "of Sir John Oldcastle, Knight, sometime the Lord Cobham."

But a bill was brought in Parliament again by the Commons against their continually wasting the temporalities, as had been done twice before through the

efforts of the Lord Cobham, both in the days of King Richard the II., 1395, and also of King Henry the IV., 1410. This effort of the Commons aroused all the malice and rage of the bishops, priests, monks, and friars, and with their usual craft they compassed to defeat the bill by another of their jesuitical contrivances.

They reminded the King of his right in France, and induced him to claim the same, granting him for the purpose a dime, with other great subsidies of money. Thus were Christ's people betrayed every way, and their lives bought and sold by those most cruel thieves. For in the said parliament the King made this most blasphemous and cruel Act to be as a law for ever:— "That whosoever they were that should read the Scriptures in the mother tongue, which was then called Wicliffe's learning, they should forfeit land, cattle, body, life, and goods from their heirs for ever, and so be condemned for heretics to God, enemies to the Crown, and most arrant traitors to the land." Besides this, it was enacted, "That never a sanctuary or privileged ground within the realm should hold them," though they were still permitted both to be thieves and murderers. And if in case they would not give over, or were after their pardon relapsed, they should suffer death in two manner of kinds, that is, they should first be hanged, and then be burned for heresy against God." This law was afterwards proclaimed throughout the realm; and then had the bishops, priests, monks, and

friars, a world somewhat to their own minds. For then were many taken in divers quarters, and suffered most cruel deaths for teaching and preaching to the people the glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ. And many fled out of this country into Germany, Bohemia, France, Portugal, and the wilds of Scotland and Wales, working there marvels against their false kingdom. In the Christmas following, Sir Roger Acton, Knight; Master John Brown; Sir John Beverlay, a learned preacher; and many others, were attacked for preaching against the priests and bishops, and so imprisoned. For all men at that time could not suffer their blasphemous doings.

Complaint was made to the king of Sir John Oldcastle and others, that they had great assemblies in Olchon and other places. As the king was thus informed, he erected a banner with a cross thereon, and with a great number of men went to some of the places of which he had been informed, but found no such company; yet the complaint was judged true, because the bishops had spoken it. But in the meantime Sir John Oldcastle, the Lord Cobham, escaped out of the Tower of London in the night, and so fled into Wales, where he continued at Olchon for more than four years. *

Some writers have thought that Sir John's escape came by the help of Sir Roger Acton, and other gentlemen who were, like himself, at enmity with the bishops and priests; and this escape to be the chief cause of their deaths.

For, in the January next following, the above-named Sir Roger Acton, Master John Browne, Sir John Beverlay, and thirty-six more, "of whom the world was not worthy," who were gentlemen by birth, were convicted of heresy by the Bishops, and condemned for treason by the temporality, and, according to the Act, were first hanged and then burnt in St. Giles' Field. In the same year also John Claydon, a skinner, and one Richard Furnyne, a baker, were both hanged and burnt in Smithfield by that virtuous Act; and much of the same kind of work was done in many parts of England and Wales if it were thoroughly known.

Thomas Arundel, who, to the great destruction of Christain belief, had been Archbishop of Canterbury for more than thirty-two years, died in the year of our Lord 1415. His great tyranny, however, did not die with him; it succeeded with his office in the person of Henry Chichley, and with even more of that spitetul spirituality of Arundel. For their malice against the good Lord Cobham was not yet sated. They confederated with the Lord Powys, who was at that time a great governor in Wales, feeding him with lordly gifts and promises to induce him to accomplish their evil designs upon Sir John. He at last, bribed with money, like Judas, and outwardly
* pretending great favour and amity, in the most cowardly and wretched manner, took Sir John at Olchon, or in the neighbourhood, and so sent him to London, where he remained a month or two imprisoned again in the Tower;

and after a long process they condemned him of heresy and treason; and he returned thanks unto God that he had so appointed him to suffer for His name sake.

And upon the day appointed he was brought out of the Tower with his arms bound behind him, having a very cheerful countenance. Then he was laid upon a hurdle, as though he had been a most heinous traitor to the Crown, and so drawn forth into St. Giles' Field, where they had set up a new pair of gallows. As he was come to the place of execution and was taken from the hurdle, he fell down devoutly upon his knees, desiring Almighty God to forgive his enemies; then he stood up and beheld the multitude, exhorting them in the most godly manner to follow the laws of God written in the scriptures, and particularly to beware of such teachers as they saw contrary to Christ in their conversation and living, with many other special counsels. Then he was hanged up by the middle, in chains of iron, and so burned alive in the fire, praising the name of God as long as his life lasted. Thus died one who, in spite of many errors of judgment, had the best interests of his fellow countrymen at heart. Whatever were his defects, Olchon has long forgotten them in his virtues. In the end he commended his soul into the hands of God, and so departed hence most christianly—his body being resolved to ashes.

This terrible death, with gallows, chains, and fire, took place in the year of our Lord 1418, which was the sixth year of the reign of Henry the Fifth. The people who

witnessed the perpetration of this crime against man and God, showed great distress and pain; but the Priests, how they feasted, blasphemed, and cursed, requiring the people not to pray for him, but to judge him damned in Hell; because he departed not in obedience to them and to their Pope. Such a death cannot appear very precious in the eyes of carnal men, any more than did the death of Christ when He was hanged up between thieves. 'The righteous seemeth to die,' saith the wise man, "in the sight of them which are unwise, and their end is taken for very destruction."

"Ungodly fools think their lives very madness, and their passage hence without all honour. But though they suffer pain before men," saith He, "yet is their expectation full of immortality. They are accounted for the children of God, and have their just portion among the Saints. As gold in the furnace doth God try his elect, and as a most pleasant burnt offering receiveth He them to rest. The more hard the passage be, the more glorious shall they appear in the latter resurrection. Not that the afflictions of this life are worthy of such a glory, but that it is God's heavenly pleasure so to reward them. Never are the judgments and ways of men like unto the judgments and ways of God, but contrary evermore, unless they be taught of Him."

"In the latter time," said the Lord unto Daniel, "shall many be chosen, proved, and purified by fire; yet shall the ungodly live wickedly still, and have no

understanding that is of faith." By an Angel from Heaven was John earnestly commianded to write that "blessed are the dead which hence depart in the Lord." "Right dear," saith David, "in the sight of God is the death of His true servants." Thus resteth this valiant Christian Knight, Sir John Oldcastle, under the altar of God (which is Jesus Christ), among the godly company, which in the kingdom of patience suffered great tribulation, with the death of their bodies, for His faithful word and testimony, abiding there with them the fulfilling of their whole number, and the full restoration of the elect.

Besides the causes already related for the dreadful death of this most Christian Knight, Sir John Oldcastle, the following is also assigned as one. In the end of the first book which he wrote against the abuses of the clergy, in the year of our Lord, 1395, and which he placed in the Parliament House, were six verses, one of which is here given, written as a brief summary of the whole of the contents of the book. Though the verses are gross and imperfect according to the time, when all fresh literature was clearly extinguished, yet they are lively, and of a fresh and faithful spirit, even in the zeal of Elias and Phinehas for the rebuke of sin.

Bewail may England the sin of Sodomites,
For idols, and they are ground of all their woe,
Of Simon Magus, a sect of hypocrites,
Surnamed prelates, are up with them to go,

And to uphold them in all that they may do;
 You that be rulers, peculiarly selected,
 How can you suffer such mischiefs uncorrected?

Thus commonly innocent men are lied against by bishops, priests, monks, and friars. But He, who is essentially true of Himself, has promised at one time or other to clear his servants, not by lies and fables, but by His own pure word. No secret is so close but it shall be opened, neither is anything so hid that it shall not at the last be clearly known. And so Sir John Oldcastle, of Olchon, has a triumphant victory over his enemies by the verities which he so nobly defended, all contrary to the blind world's expectations, and they have a foul overthrow, being proved manifest murderers, blind beasts, hypocrites, and liars. Such a Blessed Lord is God always to those who are His true and faithful servants. Glory be to His holy name for ever! *

* See Bishop Bale's Works, and Joshua Thomas' History of the Welsh Baptists.





The Life of Mr. Habasor Howell.



CHAPTER I.

TILL the twentieth year of my age, though I was trained up in learning from my childhood, I was, as most youths are, not only ignorant of the knowledge of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ, and of regeneration, and other mysteries of the Gospel, and of my own miserable estate by nature ; but I was also very active in the pursuit of the pleasures and vanities of this wicked world, and justly termed by my companions, “Captain in all evil :” only drunkenness I much hated ; looking upon it as such an unnatural thing, that the most greedy, silly beasts abstain from it ; and I wondered that persons could delight in that which had neither true pleasure, profit, nor honour in it. I had no esteem for the holy Scriptures, nor cared at all to look into them ; but historical or poetical books, romances, and the like, were all my delight. The Sabbath I much profaned by all sports ; though God was pleased to magnify his grace so much as to make that the occasion of my conversion.

For being one Lord's day a stander-by and beholder of those that broke the Sabbath by divers games, being then myself a reader of Common-Prayer, and in the habit of a foolish Shepherd, I was ashamed to play with them; yet took as much pleasure therein as if I had; whereupon a godly professor of religion, (one of those then called Puritans,) seeing me there, came to me, and very soberly and mildly asked me, "Doth it become you, Sir, that are a scholar, and one that teacheth others, to break the Lord's Sabbath thus?" to whom I answered, as those scoffers in Malachi, "Wherein do I break it? You see me only stand by: but I do not play at all:" to which he replied, "But you find your own pleasure herein, by looking on: and this God forbids in his holy word." So he opened his Bible, and read these words in Isai. lviii. 13. and particularly that expression, "Not finding thy own pleasure upon the Sabbath-day." Such was the pertinence of the place, and the power that came with the word, that I was for the present silent, and took it so far into consideration, as to resolve never to transgress in the like kind again; which resolution God enabled me to perform; though as yet I was not at all convinced of my lost estate by nature, nor of the want of Christ.

About a year after I had a call to hear an excellent Preacher, who showed that they who would go to heaven must do four sorts of service; namely, hard service, costly service, derided service, and forlorn ser-

vice : upon the last he put me to question whether I was such a one as was singular or walked in that way wherein few walked, or had performed any of those services ; and the more I examined myself, the more I was convinced that I had not ; which began to disquiet me much, and made me go into private, where in darkness I struggled, not knowing what to do, and was ashamed to inquire ; having never read seriously any part of the holy Scriptures, nor any other godly book, nor ever prayed privately, except by forms, and that without understanding, sense, faith, or the spirit of supplication ; for which things I began to be troubled, but yet knew not what course to take, but resolved to cast myself down before God on my knees, and acknowledge I was in such estate that I knew not what to do, unless he would direct and help me ; being much discouraged by my own weakness and ignorance. Then by a choice providence I came to find a book written by Doctor Sibbes, called “ The Bruised Reed ; ” and by reading that, I found there was encouragement for weak ones, and such as had but a smoke of true desire. Yet still I was like one groping in the dark, till God sent a holy, sober Christian to me, who pitied my condition, and told me what a hard work conversion was ; it being no less than to make a stone flesh, and darkness light. These, with many such words, began to enter deep into my heart ; and from that time I took up the profession of godliness, although the foundation was not laid deep enough ; but I was disquieted

within me, and like a boat tossed upon the waves, that could make to no shore for safety.

At this time I was visited with a very sore pain of the toothache, which continued divers days and nights together, in great extremity; and by another good providence, I met with a little book of Mr. Perkins, and in that, with this expression, "If the pains of one little bone be so grievous for a few days, what will the pains of the whole body and soul be in hell for evermore?" Upon this my terror began in conscience to that degree, that it made the other pain seem somewhat more easy; and both together put me upon crying out to God with greater feeling than before; and between fear and pain, a troubled spirit of prayer began to spring up. Perceiving that I had some help, I prayed harder; and so at last my heart began to be enlarged with confessions, and my sins were brought into remembrance, for which I arraigned myself, and lay in my own thoughts as a convicted and guilty person; but all the while I knew not how to attain pardon. All this while I never looked on the Scripture; nay, I laid aside that book called "The Bruised Reed," as too good for me to read, and wherein I could expect no comfort.

But shortly after, hearing of another famous Preacher, I resolved to hear him. He preached that day upon Mark xvi. 15, 16, "Preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved." Out of which words he showed, that as the Gospel was to be

preached to every creature, so none could be saved but such as believed in Christ; which afterwards, by comparing it with John i. 12, he showed that it was to receive Christ; and thereupon he encouraged all to receive Christ, because he would supply all their wants, strengthen them under all their weaknesses, succour them against all their temptations, and the like. Upon the urging of these motives, I was much encouraged, and persuaded to receive Christ upon his own terms. But then he showed, that they who would have Christ, and salvation by him, must learn the harshest part with the sweetest, and suffer the sorest things; which words being suitable to those that wrought the first conviction upon me, they were the more observable; and as a second wedge clave my heart somewhat more, and caused further resolutions in me to perform those particulars; and to that end I began to read the Bible, to pray often in private, to hear the strictest Preachers, and to leave off my old companions, and to choose others who professed religion, with whom I went to private and public fasts, held Christian conferences, &c.

Upon further hearing concerning the old heart, that every man had some master and beloved sin, and that there was a necessity of having the heart changed, and corruption mortified and subdued, the Lord showed me the sad and lost estate my soul was in; and now the work of contrition began in me with many sighs and bitter tears, self-loathing, and self-abasing, confessing of

former sins, sorrowing, and judging myself for them, and striving against them, and seeking to kill them by long abstinence from meat, by much watchfulness, by drinking cold water only, many months together, by tying up myself to eat so many bits of meat, (and that of the coarsest sort too,) at every meal; (sometimes six, sometimes eight, and twelve was a great meal with me;) and by this means I thought to overcome the flesh. Flying sometimes to the holy command of God against sin, I found no other relief than a school-boy doth, who complains to his master against the hardness of his lesson; (Rom. vii. 9;) for the commandment came, stirred and revived sin, and so I began to die and despair; the law telling me I was a condemned sinner, the justice and terrors of God did seize upon my conscience, and the spirit of fear and bondage (as the fruit of the law, and an effect of God's wrath) bound me like a prisoner, to answer every breach of the law, Rom. xi. 32: not leading me to Christ, but restraining me from him, and shutting me up in unbelief. And when sometimes through energy and earnestness of spirit in prayer, I called God Father, I had checks upon my conscience for my presumption; and to silence this charge, I was forced to confess my sin of false faith, and watch my tongue from uttering any such boldness for the time to come.

Thus finding no relief from the law of God, but the threats and judgments thereof scorching and wounding my soul, I looked for some suitable promise; not any

promise of justification, but of sanctification, as, "That God would give a new heart, and would subdue iniquities." (Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27; Micah vii. 19) So I fell to praying over these, and the like promises; but finding no answer of prayer, my heart no more sanctified, nor my corruptions subdued, the next work (at the instigation of Satan) was, to conclude that I had no right to any promise, being out of Christ, and that all my prayers were an abomination to God; and so I began to question whether it was best for me to continue in prayer, or to forbear. But I was not long under that temptation; considering that prayer was a moral duty, and to be performed by all; and that the sin in a duty should not make a man neglect his duty; for upon the same account a man must leave ploughing, because the Scripture saith, "The ploughing of the wicked is sin." (Prov. xxi. 4.) Hereupon I purposed to be more diligent to get into Christ, and to have a new heart, that so I might perform my duty acceptably. I also resolved to prepare myself more for prayer, to search and keep my heart more carefully in my duty to God. If vain thoughts, or hardness of heart prevailed, then I had (as the Apostle saith, Heb. x. 2) conscience of sin; my conscience smiting, condemning, and disquieting me, driving me to prayer again immediately, it may be twice, thrice, or oftener together; yea, making me often to rise out of bed several times in a night, and forcing me on my bare knees on the cold floor, as if that had been more pleasing

to God. But all this being done in my own strength, and to work a self-righteousness, as it was unacceptable to God, so unprofitable to me.

Then, hearing that Christ was sent to sinners, I thought of coming to Christ, but durst not, through a mistake in the meaning of some scriptures; as that invitation of Christ, "Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden;" (Matt. xi. 28;) and those words, "I came to seek and to save that which was lost;" (Luke xix. 10;) from whence I concluded, that none were invited by Christ, but those that are weary and heavy laden, and such as see and feel their lost condition; whereas it is meant, that they in an especial manner are invited. I concluded, I was not yet fit for Christ, but must have a greater and clearer sight of sin; therefore I often and earnestly prayed, that God would perform that promise, "They shall loath themselves for the evil they have committed in all their abominations;" (Ezek. vi. 9;) yea, I desired, (though not understanding what I said,) that God would let Satan appear in some shape to terrify me, that by that means I might see my danger, so much the more to induce me to fly to Christ.

Hereupon Satan took advantage, and showed me my sins, in their number and nature, to be such, that there was no pardon for them, and therefore tempted me oft and divers ways to destroy myself; sometimes by casting myself into a river, to drown myself, whither he brought me: and whilst I reasoned the case with him, this was

frequently his motive to me, the fewer sins I committed in this world, and the shorter time I lived in it, the less would be my torment. He often tempted me also to destroy myself with a knife ; so that I was often necessitated to fling it out of my hand when I was at meat alone in my chamber, and to rise from my meat, for fear ; so that I durst not for some time carry a knife with me. But when the Lord relieved me sometimes by one means, and sometimes by another, I was strengthened with this resolution, that God should do what he would with me, for I would never do as Judas did, destroy myself. When Satan saw that he was disappointed in that temptation, then he told me that I was a reprobate, and let me profess what I would, my damnation was sure, and my hypocrisy, and sins under profession, would be worse than any other sins, and therefore it were better of the two, to lay down my profession and the duties thereof. To that temptation the Lord helped me to answer him thus,—that whilst I lived in scandalous sins, he never thus tempted me ; and I was resolved, if I knew that God would condemn me, yet to have as few sins as I could to answer for hereafter.

When these temptations failed, then he began to raise up persecution against me ; as, one day going through the town where I was born, from Kingstown to Lanvaire-Waterdine, I met with two gentlemen, kinsmen of mine, both drunk, who called upon me to come to them, and without the least provoking word, or act, they fell upon

me, and one of them with a crab-tree cudgel, wounded me sorely : and their pretence was, that I had reprovèd them for sin : but God raised me up, and gave me a heart freely to forgive them.

Another time, four men laid wait in a secret place, as I went upon a Lord's day morning to the ordinance, with several weapons, being all of them, as was confessed by one of them afterwards. under a vow to kill me : but God, by his providence, prevented them, in sending two strangers unexpectedly to help, who, riding before, discovered them, whereupon they fled ; yet vented their malice upon some other Christians, whom they wounded. But one of them that day came to a meeting, and in hearing of me was so convinced of his sin, that he was heard publicly to repent of what he had done, and never after was known to persecute any. Another time, a very wicked man entered into an oath, that whenever he met with me, he would kill me. He waited his opportunity, dwelling near me several times to do it ; and one Lord's day he went to the place where I preached, with a full intention, either at my going, or returning home, to execute his purpose : but being at the sermon, and hearing Christ so freely offered to sinners, the word so affected him, that he wept, saying within himself, "What a villain am I to intend evil against such a man !" The next morning, very early, he came to the house where I lodged, desiring to speak with me in private, and with tears confessed this to me ; and desired me to

pardon him, and pray for him ; and ever after he was very friendly to me.

Another time, being in Brecknockshire, at an honest man's house, I preached to several persons that were then together : my text was Ezekiel xxxiv. 16 ; from which I observed, that though the little flock of Christ be despised and dispersed, yet they shall be gathered, prized, and preserved. As I was handling this doctrine, about twelve or sixteen lusty roysters broke into the house, and several times attempted to offer violence to me, and to the rest of the brethren that were with me ; but it pleased God to restrain them. At length, by the procurement of Mr. Hugh Floyd, the High Sheriff for the year, I was bound over to the Sessions, and an indictment preferred against me ; wherein I was accused, first, of drawing away the King's subjects ; secondly, of speaking against the Book of Common-Prayer ; thirdly, of sacrilege ; which last accusation was grounded upon the drawing down of a meeting-house door, by me and the Churchwardens, that the people, which came in a great crowd, might hear with better convenience : but the Lord did so own his own cause, and me the unworthiest of his servants, that I was then delivered also. Yet finding the persecution so hot against me, that I could not be permitted to serve the Lord there, I did, by the advice of my brethren, leave my native country of Wales, and was conducted safely to London, where I arrived in August, in the year 1642.

Another time, as I was preaching upon the side of a

hill, (being denied leave to preach in a public place,) a company of roysters came with swords, staves, and fowling-pieces; and after some opposition, one of them cried, "Down with him! down with him!" but the Lord stirred up some of the people to preserve me, and prevent them.

Another time, a wicked butcher, who had long threatened me, lying in wait as it seems for me, one night stood in a narrow passage, through which I was to come, with a great club; but his blow falling short of me, by the protection of God, I escaped his hands.

CHAPTER II.

DURING my abode in London, where I continued preaching for above two years, I had great experience of God's goodness in providing for me, and in succeeding my ministry to the spiritual good and the conversion of many; but the greatest of all my enemies since my conversion, are as follows, concerning the time and manner of my obtaining assurance.

After I had been about four years in constant doubts, and great fears, as to my eternal condition, being oftentimes tempted by Satan to destroy myself; and preaching also to others shaking and terrifying doctrines, particularly out of Luke xi. 35, "Take heed lest the light that be in thee be darkness:" for a month's space or above, I was very sad, melancholy, and much troubled; neglecting to eat, drink, or sleep; and this was occasioned principally,

through the apprehension I had of that distance which I saw to be between Christ and my soul, which was set home upon my heart with much power, from these words, "Behold, he stands behind our wall, he looked through the window upon me," (Cant. ii. 9.) Whilst I was in this state, refusing to be comforted, the all-wise God laid his hand of sickness upon me, by which I was brought even to the gates of death; and in the sight both of Physicians and friends, and in my own expectation, I was a dying man; yet much more sensible of the danger I apprehended my soul to be in, than of my bodily weakness, sweating with the horror of it, and diligently examining myself by the best signs I could either find at that time, or had found before, which I had writ down with the grounds of my fear in a little diary; which book I then desired to see, but having lent it a Christian friend that was far distant, I could not. I lay even at the next door to despair, waiting for nothing less than to be suddenly cast into hell. Whilst I was in this agony, the God of all grace, who brought back from the depth of the sea, did about noon present to me that scripture, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." (John iii. 36.) Which words were then opened thus: first, that there was nothing necessary to salvation, but only believing in Christ; secondly, that to such as did believe in Christ, there was a certainty of salvation. My understanding being cleared in these two particulars, I was then to seek and to learn, whether

I did believe or not; and to know that, I examined myself, what signs of true faith I had, and how I could prove that I did believe; and finding no certain evidence, being also convinced that I had before, many years, gone in that way to no purpose, I continued still in a hopeless state; but upon a sudden, and unexpectedly, a mighty power, no less than that Spirit which raised up Christ Jesus from the dead, and which declared him to be the Son of God, enabled me to believe, and witnessed effectually in me that I did believe: which divine impression I look upon to be all one with that sealing spoken of in Eph. i. 13, and the witnessing of the Spirit of God with our spirits: (Rom. viii. 16:) and thereupon I had perfect peace, my heart not at all condemning me. But according to 1 John iii. 21, I had a confidence towards God; and not only so, but my heart likewise was filled with admiration, and great joy, according to that saying, "Whom having not seen ye love; in whom though now you see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory." (1 Peter i. 8.)

After this manifestation, and wonderful operation of God, which I could never express, either by word or writing, so clearly and distinctly as then I apprehended and felt it in my soul, the Lord added the mercy of natural life and health, and so I experienced the fulness of those two scriptures, "Heaviness in the heart of man maketh it stoop; but a good word maketh it glad." (Prov. xii. 25). "And a sound heart is life to the flesh."

(Prov. xiv. 30). Being restored both to my health, and the exercise of my ministry, I was taught by the Lord to preach in another manner than before : namely, to lay Christ as the foundation, and to preach him chiefly and mainly ; and duties in a secondary and subservient way. Yet, from hence also did Satan take occasion to thrust at me ; and throw me into the other extreme, even unto that which is truly and properly called Antinomianism, to destroy and utterly deny the use of the law ; but the Lord did timely and graciously prevent my fall in this also, and fulfilled unto me that scripture, “ He that fears the Lord shall come out of all ;” namely, out of all extremes, as the foregoing words do show. (Eccles. vii. 18).

To omit many other remarkable providences of God towards me for the space of two years that I was in London, as also his goodness to me for some space that I was in the army ; I was at length called to Dartford in Kent ; where, indeed, God’s favours of several kinds, for the space of two years and a half, were very many, as to own such a nothing creature, and enable me to bring home in that town, and thereabouts, (I hope to God’s glory I may speak it), many souls to Christ ; where also I gathered a congregation, among whom I had very sweet and comfortable society.

After some time of my abode there, it pleased the Lord to visit that town with the plague, where about thirty houses were shut up at once ; and the dead bodies

were carried by my chamber wall and window: yet it pleased God to preserve me and my family wonderfully from the disease; although I continued in the town, and preached constantly three times a week, and some that had the sickness upon them came publicly to hear; after which, the Lord stayed the plague, and delivered me from that affliction also.

Having spent above two years at Dartford, and being now upon my return home in Wales, I was willing to take along with me a certificate, or testimonial, from the Synod which sat then, and had the trial of all public Preachers. To this purpose, I applied myself to some of them, of whom Mr. Stephen Marshall was one. They questioned me about ordination; and told me, that unless I would be ordained, they could not approve: to which I answered, I was willing to be tried as a Christian, and as a scholar; but had some doubts about ordination, as that particularly, whether the eldership mentioned 1 Tim. iv. 14, were to be understood of one or more congregations, in which I was not yet satisfied; and then, addressing myself particularly to Mr. Marshall, and reasoning the case with him, they at last gave me this following certificate:—

“These are to certify those whom it may concern, that the bearer hereof, Mr. Vavasor Powell, is a man of religious and blameless conversation, and of able gifts for the work of the ministry, and hath approved himself faithful therein; which we, whose names are under-

written, do testify : some of our own knowledge, others from credible and sufficient information : and therefore, he being now called and desired to exercise his gifts in his own country of Wales, he also having the language thereof, we conceive him fit for that work, and worthy of encouragement therein, In witness whereof, we here subscribe our names. September 11, 1646.

CHARLES HERTE, Prolocutor.

HENRY SCUDDER,	STEPHEN MARSHALL,
WILLIAM GREENHILL,	JER. WHITAKER,
FRANC. WOODCOCK,	(ARTHUR SALWEY,
WILLIAM STRONG,	PETER STERRY,
JOSEPH CARYL,	HENRY PRICE,
WILLIAM CARTER,	CHRISTOPHER LOVE,
THOMAS WILSON,	THO. FROYSSELL,
JER. BURROUGHS,	ROBERT BETTES."
PHILIP NYE,	

I may say, through God's grace, (and that experimentally,) that God was pleased to own me, a poor, nothing creature, in the work of his Gospel in Wales, both to call, gather, and edify, I hope, many souls there; yet not I, but the grace of God in me, and with me; and among many other experiences of God's goodness, these following are some:

About the year 1647 the island of Anglesey, in North Wales, being then unreduced, the Parliamentary forces went to reduce it: and their chief officers sent for me to preach to that brigade of soldiers. As I marched with

them to the place, either the night immediately before, or the night before that, it was revealed unto me in my sleep, that I should be wounded, and two of my friends cut, (and the very fingers were pointed out,) which accordingly came to pass; yet when I was in extreme danger, between several enemies who fell upon me, receiving that and some other wounds, there being no likelihood to escape, I heard a voice, as I apprehended, speaking audibly to me, "I have chosen thee to preach the Gospel;" to which I answered, "O Lord, then bring me off;" and immediately God guided my horse (though he was very wild, and not well commanded) to go backward out of the barricado that I had entered, and so I was indeed miraculously preserved; although a good man, a Captain who came to relieve me, was killed close to me; and, as far as I could perceive, the same bullet that was shot at me, took him in the neck, and killed him.

Many other remarkable circumstances there are in this deliverance, which I here omit.

Several other times also I have been delivered from perils by water, by thieves, by enemies purposely lying in wait for me, who yet had no power to hurt me: the Lord converted some and graciously prevented and terrified others from their purpose.

But I must not forget the favour of the Lord in answering prayer, of which the most remarkable instances are these.

One time coming from preaching, I lost my way, and being out till it was far in the night in a wood, among lakes, briers, and thorns, I went up and down till I was quite weary ; but by looking up to the Lord, I was presently directed into my way. The like experience I had at another time, when another Preacher and myself had lost our way in a very dark night, and had tired ourselves in searching to and fro, to no purpose ; at last, calling to mind how God had formerly heard in that case, when I sought unto him, we called upon the Lord, who immediately pointed out our way, and it seemed as clear to us as if it had been daylight.

One Mrs. Watkins, of the parish of Lanniggn, in the county of Brecknock, a pious gentlewoman, having kept her chamber and bed, as was reported, for two years, and not gone from home for the space of four years, hearing that I was come into those parts, sent for me to come and visit her ; she having, it seems, some faith, that if I prayed for her, she should be healed ; and the next morning she went between two and three miles on foot to hear me preach.

Another time, Elizabeth Morris, of New-Radnor, (a religious woman,) having the falling sickness, or convulsion fits, which took her many times in one day ; one night, being at family duty in a brother's house, in town, whilst I was speaking, she fell into one of her fits ; but prayer being made for her, she recovered before the prayer was ended ; and for many years had no more fits,

and I think hath not been troubled at all since.

These few things, of many which I have observed in myself, concerning the Lord's gracious and wonderful dealing with me, I have set down, not as boasting or seeking praise to myself, but to keep a memorial of the Lord's benefits; and to stir up others, into whose hands these few notes may come, to have confidence in the power and goodness of God, who is the Saviour of all men, but especially of them that believe in him.

CHAPTER III.

MR. VAVASOR POWELL was born of honest and honourable parentage; his father, Mr. Richard Powell, of a very ancient family in Wales, living in the borough of Knocklas, in Radnorshire, where his ancestors had lived for some hundred years before him. His mother was of the Vavasors, a family of great antiquity, that came out of Yorkshire into Wales; and so by both he was allied to most of the best families in North Wales: though his best pedigree and highest descent was that which he derived from the most honourable family of Abraham. For the unworthiest persons many times pretend to the highest worldly descents, the new-born being only the best-born.

He was brought up a scholar, and taken by his uncle, Mr. Erasmus Powell, to be Curate at Clun, where he also kept a school; in which time it pleased God, in the midst of his vanity and enmity to Christ and his people, to call

and convert him, (especially by the ministry of that eminent servant of Christ, Mr. Walter Cradock,) which was attended with deep humility in the sight and sense of sin, and lost estate by nature; and he was led by a spirit of bondage, through legal terrors, to clear manifestations of the love of Christ, encountering manifold temptations within and without.

He in a little time profited above many, and being very zealous, and full of love to Christ, did bestir himself exceedingly in preaching the Gospel, labouring therein more abundantly than any we have known, giving himself wholly to the work both in public and private; God also accompanying him with his blessing and presence in great success. The generality of the country, being then as fields white unto the harvest, flocked ardently to his ministry, and many by his preaching were turned to the Lord; so that Radnorshire, that before was a dark country, came to have much light; and in a short space many eminent professors were raised up in it; at which Satan began to rage exceedingly, and stirred up some of his instruments to persecute the truth, laying wait for his life and liberty; some by a judicial way, some by violence, till they drove him out of the country; from whence he went to London, where in the time of the war he continued some time. He was called to Dartford, in Kent, where he was very successful in his ministry, in the gathering of a church. Afterwards, the times growing more peaceable, he was called into

Wales again, where he renewed his former labours, preaching the word in season and out of season ; so that by him Christ made manifest the savour of his knowledge and grace in every place throughout the country ; insomuch that there were but few, if any, of the churches, chapels, town-halls in Wales, wherein he did not preach Christ ; yea, very often upon mountains, and very frequently in fairs and markets. It was admirable to consider how industrious he was, by his often preaching in two or three places a day, and seldom two days in a week throughout the year out of the pulpit ; nay, he would sometimes ride a hundred miles in a week, and preach in every place where he might have admission both day and night, if he passed through any fair or market, or near any great concourse of people, so great was his love to souls. He would take the opportunity in his journey to preach Christ ; yea, his whole life was a continual preaching, giving seasonable instruction to every body he met with, being fruitful and exemplary in word, doctrine, conversation, spirit. It was his custom, wherever he came, to leave some spiritual instructions and gracious savour behind him.

He was endued with such courage of mind, and furnished with such ability of body, that he went through his work with great delight, many admiring how he was able to hold out. He was an able Minister of the New Testament, and always in readiness, upon all occasions, to fulfil his ministry ; and, like the good house-

holder, brought forth out of his treasury things new and old; being very indefatigable in his work, speaking, and praying, sometimes, three, four, nay, six, and seven, hours together. He was very faithful in delivering the word of truth, and in explaining it to the meanest capacity; and still endeavoured to suit his discourse to the occasion and condition of the hearers. He neither regarded nor feared the frowns or favours of great men, but faithfully and courageously would warn and reprove them to their faces. He was very affectionate in drawing and inviting sinners to Christ; and as sharply would he reprove the profane, the rebellious hypocrites and backsliders; and most compassionately sympathize with the weak, afflicted, and tempted. He was very excellent in the illustrating of his doctrine by familiar comparisons, parables, and similitudes, which used to be very profitable to the hearers, tending greatly to imprint the truth in their minds; and which was so much the way taken by our Saviour, that it is said, without a parable he spake not. He had a ready wit, was well read in history and geography, a good natural philosopher, and skilled in physic; which greatly furthered his invention. But, above all, he was very powerful in prayer, much endued with the Spirit, an eloquent man, and mighty in the Scriptures, which were so admirably imprinted in his memory, that he was as a Concordance wherever he came; so that a scripture could hardly be named to him, but he could tell you the chapter and verse. He had such an

admirable memory, that if he heard two or three sermons together, he could repeat them verbatim; though towards his latter end, by his long imprisonment, being kept from the exercise of his gifts, his memory was impaired.

He was very exact in keeping punctually to his appointed times of preaching, having divers lectures, both weekly, fortnightly, monthly, and two months, and quarterly; besides extraordinary appointments, both in England and Wales; which no ill weather, frost nor snow, nor ordinary difficulties, could hinder him from attending.

One time, as he was going to preach, his horse fell lame; and as he could not well reach the place appointed on foot, being in a great strait, he bethought himself of the way that one David ap Hugh took in like case, and addressed himself to it. He alighted off his horse, went to prayer, and begged strength of God both for himself and horse, to perform his journey; which accordingly was made good to him; for mounting his horse, he found his lameness was departed.

One time he was to preach at Lempster, in Herefordshire, upon the first day of the week, having the day before preached by the way; and as he was coming late at night, he had a very grievous fall off his horse; which bruised him much; so that he could not come further that night, and questioned whether he should be able to stir the next day; yet prayer being made, he was enabled to reach the place early in the morning, and to

preach thrice that day.

Another time, he was to preach at a place called Cery ; to perform which, he was constrained to ride night and day, until at last his horse tired ; so that he was forced to leave him by the way, and perform the rest of his journey on foot.

It was his usual custom, in riding to places to preach, if he overtook any aged people going on foot towards the meeting, to set them on his horse, and to walk himself by their sides ; which he would do for miles together.

Many have been the difficulties and hardships he underwent in his itinerant preachings ; sometimes forced to lie in the poor Welsh houses, upon the mountains, where he could find little accommodation for either horse or man ; and yet could as cheerfully spend the night in examining and instructing the poor people, as if he had had the best entertainment in the world ; for it was his meat and drink to do his Master's work, in gaining and edifying souls ; and it was his custom to reward the poor people, as much for their coarse bread and cheese, and hard lodging, as if he had been in the choicest inn.

He met many times with very hard measure from wicked drunkards, and debauched persons, by often lying in wait for his life ; and by many buffetings and stripes which he received from them ; and he was very much prejudiced by blows upon his head : yet freely did he forgive his most mischievous and malicious enemies and

persecutors, never prosecuting any of them; though he had great advantage against them, and many friends that would have righted him, and punished them; but patiently did he bear in his body the marks of the Lord Jesus; and most Christianly did he undergo all the unjust reproaches he met with from wicked men; rendering blessings for cursings, love for hatred. He used to say that he would not take a great deal by the year for the reproaches he met with, all for Christ; which he could not be without.

He was exceedingly hospitable. The feasts that he used to make were not for the rich, but the poor and aged, whom he often invited, and supplied with clothes, shoes, stockings, and all other necessary accommodations.

He was very free in the entertainment of strangers, and all saints; his house being common for them; great resort was to him, from most parts of Wales, and many from England; and he was so free-hearted, that he used to say, he had room for twelve in his beds, a hundred in his barns, and a thousand in his heart; and so liberal was he, that he would wrong himself to do good to others. He was very merciful to all poor people; and when in the greatest haste, he would not let the poor cry in vain; and severally would he with his alms impart some good instructions to their souls.

He was very loving and courteous to all his neighbours, and much beloved by them.

He was very zealous against false doctrine and errors,

corrupt and anti-christian deceivers.

He did spend and was spent in his Master's service, laying out himself, and what he had, for him; not serving him for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; finding his wages in his work; and therefore, having freely received, he freely gave. Little outward advantage accrued to him by his ministry. From the churches in Wales, he received nothing but neighbourly and brotherly kindness, which he was as ready to requite, and much more willing to give than receive; and as freely did he contribute to the necessities of others as any. The Parliament ordered him £100 per annum, out of a *sine cura*, whereof he received about £60 for seven or eight years. Many considerable gifts he refused; and never did he get any thing by the Act for the Propagation of the Gospel in Wales, as was slanderously laid to his charge; for which his vindication in print, to this day unanswered, may stop the mouth of envy itself.

And he made it appear in the consciences of all that knew him, that wealth, and worldly advantages, were not the penny that he entered the vineyard for; but the gaining of souls. His temporal estate, as is well-known, was more before the war, than at the time of his imprisonment and death. Being indeed a despiser of the world, money was no more his temptation, than it was Luther's. He was of a noble, generous, free spirit; and, as some term it, much a gentleman in all his deportment.

He was very humble and plain in his conduct, pre-

ferring others before himself, though far inferior in gifts and grace to him; and a most ready servant to do good to all both for soul and body.

He was very just in all his dealings, and would rather receive wrong, than offer injury to any and kept still a great jealousy over himself lest he should do any thing unbecoming the Gospel.

He was very pitiful to all in distress, whether saints or sinners, and especially in the case of sin, which he would deeply lay to heart; and weep bitterly in consideration of the weightiness of sin upon their souls: and greatly would he lament the scandalous offences in professors, which tended so much to the dishonour of God, grief of the saints, hardening of sinners, and endangering their own souls.

He was very active in doing good; and little time was spent by him in idleness. After great and tedious journeys, and pains in preaching, he would be as fresh to attend any work for God, as if there had been no such thing. It was his constant practice, to speak of good to all that he conversed with, and to convert worldly discourse into spiritual things; and when he apprehended any to discourse of the things of God in a common, light spirit, he would endeavour to draw them up to more seriousness and spirituality.

Wherever he was, at home or abroad, he would be still furthering good things, and improve all opportunities, with whomsoever he conversed, were it in his journey,

or upon the road, to instil something for the benefit of their souls, wherein as a follower of his Master, he was a lively pattern to the saints, and God blessed him exceedingly.

He was ready to receive exhortation, admonition, and reproof, (being, under all his excellencies and great worth, a man subject to passion and infirmity,) which he would embrace with all humble submission and thankfulness; and his conscience was so tender, that he would of himself both privately and publicly express his fears and jealousy of himself, and would desire others to tell him of his faults, which he might not so well discern in himself.

He was a faithful and diligent observer of the work of God upon his soul, whereof he kept a daily account, taking notice both of the actings of grace, and the stirrings of corruption, and the assaults which sin and Satan, or the world, made upon him.

It was his daily practice to draw forth some instruction from every object, and every thing that accrued; namely, from the Scriptures, ordinances, God's dealings with him, in every respect; from conferences with saints, or sinners; from any providence or accident, whether prosperous or adverse; from creatures, heaven, earth, the seasons; from the graces and virtues, as well as failings and infirmities, of saints and professors.

He was very heavenly; his heart being so set with diligence and intentness upon the things of God, that

when he was alone, and none to discourse with, he would many times be singing hymns in his house, and elsewhere, and often in his bed, as soon as he awoke in the morning; being excellent at extempore hymns, which have been to the refreshing of many, who have declared that they enjoyed as much of God in joining with him therein, as in any other ordinance.

His soul followed so hard after God, that he hath been heard to pray very audibly and fervently in his sleep, and yet knew it not when he awoke.

He was of an undaunted courage for God: no fear of suffering could turn him back in the work of the Lord. He had such a fervent zeal for Christ and the truth, and such hatred against sin, that he regarded not the greatness of men, in administering reproof, what danger soever might occur to him thereby. He used to say that he feared the corruption of his heart more than any sufferings he met with from men.

He with much compassion and feeling used to sympathize with the weak and tempted; making their condition his own; but would magnify his office with great zeal, by improving the authority, Christ had given him, to curb the insolent, stubborn, and rebellious.

He was one of a public spirit, zealous in furthering all things that might tend to promote the good of his neighbour and nation, but especially the saints, and Sion; in advancing the name, interest, kingdom, and sovereignty of Jesus Christ; and setting himself with

all his might against Popery, that common public enemy of mankind.

He was very tender of the consciences of others, though differing in judgment from him; and where he discerned sincerity, and truth of grace, expressed much endeared affection to them as brethren, being a lover and promoter of love to saints, as saints, without relation to particular persuasion, or private opinion.

He was exceeding successful in the work of the ministry, which was sealed to him by the conversion, confirmation, consolation, and edification of many souls, both in England and Wales.

He was instrumental in the gathering of churches, the healing and composing of many differences and breaches, wherein he travelled much by messengers, letters, conferences, and journeys, far and near.

It was his usual course, in order to preserve and maintain life and love amongst the churches, to put them upon resolving several questions from time to time; which proved exceedingly profitable to the increase of knowledge, and to the ends proposed.

He was much in visiting from house to house; taking a particular account both of the inward and outward man; inquiring after family-walks, duties, and deportment. And in an especial mannner did he with diligence attend the sick; administering all things necessary for body and soul; exhorting, comforting, and praying with and for them.

He was exceedingly zealous in preserving the holy communion pure, by keeping a diligent watch; putting forth early warning and reproof against the first appearances of envy and scandal, and by faithfully rejecting hardened and impenitent sinners; in which cases he used to be mightily powerful in the administering of excommunication, showing the terribleness thereof, so that many hearts would tremble greatly thereat; and yet with great tenderness and heart-meltings to the offenders themselves.

As he was master of a family, he was wonderfully careful to do the thing that was just and equal; and principally he designed to promote the power of godliness amongst his servants. He used to tell them that they should at any time leave work to pray, or read; and when he found them in the fields reading, or conferring about the things of God, he would bid them go on, and continue in it. How few are they that prefer the good of souls before their own worldly profit! how many are, rather, so oppressing to their servants, that they can hardly have any time, day or night, to give God what he requires!

He used in his family sometimes to repeat sermons, inquiring what they remembered; sometimes, what they had read that day in the Scriptures, and what they observed in their reading; what providences they had taken notice of, and what instruction from them; sometimes propounding useful questions to them to resolve;

sometimes he read and expounded a chapter, and informed himself how they understood it, and what they remembered from it; sometimes singing an hymn, and praying constantly; which duties he performed twice a day, if no more, when at home: and, usually, he would alter both his method and his hours, designing to bring his family up to the life of religion, and not so much to live in the form of duties.

Those servants that he saw careless of their souls, or asleep in duties, not remembering what they heard, he would charge, warn, and reprove them most strictly, and threaten to turn them out of his doors, if they did not reform.

When his occasion led him abroad to preach, which was very often, he left them with strict charge to perform the family duties amongst themselves.

As he was a housekeeper, he had all things provided decently and in good order; his husbandry and all his affairs well contrived, and managed with great discretion.

The following account, so well agreeing with the former, and given in by his beloved wife, Mrs. Katherine Powell, is thought meet here to be inserted:—

He was exceedingly tender to all persons, to their inward and outward man, bountiful in heart and hand to any he saw in need, or that desired good from him. A fifth part of all his income, either of the little he had of his own, or otherwise, he dedicated to the Lord's service, and gave it to any in want. Much of it would he give

to poor carnal persons, saying, we should not only be kind to one another; for God is kind to the unthankful and unholy; and that Christians should do good for the honour of the Gospel: striving by this, as well as other ways, to make the poor in love with the good way of God, and the professors of it.

Though he suffered much, and in various ways, yet he never retained anger to the instruments; but could weep in secret for them, that their sins might be blotted out. Nor ever did I know him by any surprising trial unfitted for prayer, or any service for God.

He was a man of great sincerity and plainness, who either spake his heart, or spake not at all; nor omitted speaking what he thought was his duty, for fear of displeasing any; and yet he had a most winning, obliging carriage to all persons. He was very observant how his soul prospered; to which end, he wrote every night what he had gained or lost that day.

He was a man of great faith in all things that God has promised to his people. He went with much humble, holy boldness, (through faith in the blood of Jesus,) to tell God what he wanted, who did give eminent returns.

He was a man of great humility, esteeming inferior Christians before himself, and willing that others should do so too.

He was much in prayer. He devoted one part of the day to seek God for Zion, not mixing other requests at that time; and was constant in family duty, morning and

night at least. Immediately before he composed himself to rest, he took leave by a few words in prayer to the Lord; and so in the morning, when he awoke, he renewed communion afresh with God, sometimes by prayer, sometimes (when his heart overflowed with spiritual joy) in songs or hymns of praise, and that in a very broken and melting frame.

He was very conscientious and exemplary in all relative duties, and very punctual to his word. If he promised any thing, it was as binding to him as the most legal obligation. He was naturally of a hasty spirit; but if at any time it brake out, he would in a short space recover himself, and return to as sweet and amiable a spirit as could be desired, and candidly acknowledge his passion, and mourn over it.

He was a very strict and conscientious observer of the Sabbath, not doing or speaking on that day what he saw lawful upon other days, attending the duties thereof from evening to evening.

To these testimonies, tending to preserve the savour of this eminent servant of Christ, it is thought meet to add also the following testimonial, by some of his ancient acquaintance, and persons of known worth and integrity:—

As for his birth, gentlemen of the best rank in the counties of Salop, Radnor, Montgomery, &c., saluted him as their kinsman. And for his education, (though from his childhood brought up a scholar,) we measured

it by the endowments of his mind as a man, a Christian, a Preacher; his dexterous faculties, both natural and acquired; his Scripture learning, and gifts of utterance, adorning those several capacities. He was an indefatigable labourer in the harvest, preaching almost every day in one parish or other, and often twice or thrice a day.

His acceptance was above many of his fellowlabourers in the Gospel, as appeared by the numerous concourse of auditors to his frequent lectures; who were as unwearied in hearing as he in speaking. His success also was answerable. Who saw not his labours prosperous? Who can blast that which the Lord blesseth, or dares vilify what the King delighted to honour? He was no fruitless itinerant, but fully approved himself a workman that needed not to be ashamed, employed by the Head of the church to convert, comfort, edify many souls; to reprove, rebuke, exhort all.

He was welcomed wherever he came, both by the morally civil and the truly religious; the quickness of his imagination, the strength of his memory, the fulness of his conceptions, the variety of his discourses, and the readiness of utterance, challenging more than ordinary respect; and the exemplariness of his piety, the tenderness of his affections, the forwardness of his zeal, the holiness of his doctrine, and eminency of all his graces, endearing him. Only the superstitious hated him, because he never prophesied good concerning them, but

evil.

We confess that we ourselves have had as deep prejudice against him as any could have; but have been taught by experience this better character of him.

He had a body of steel, made as of purpose for his never-resting spirit, which, by his extraordinary motion, might have worn out many ordinary bodies. His labours were his recreations. He had a heart that feared none but Him that is to be feared for his mercy. He would often melt in private mourning for those that had the most inflamed hearts against Christ and his people. His head was not only a fountain of tears, because men keep not God's law, but also a conduit of divine instruction, teaching them how to keep it. His tongue was as the pen of a ready writer, which was so touched with a coal from the altar, that it knew no difference between rich and poor, mean and honourable. He was a Latimer for his plain dealing; a Luther for his zeal; and a Paul for his diligence. It was the mantle of the great Prophet, that was his raiment: the power and spirit of Him that was greater than Elias rested on him, by which he was made instrumental in the doing of wonders, even the reviving of many a dead soul. There are many servants of God in Wales, that can say of him, as Paul does of himself, that though they had many teachers, yet they had not many fathers in Christ.

He was for many years a daily miner in the works of Christ; and we are confident that there is not at this day

in England a labourer that can show more right silver-ore of his own raising than he got out of the Welsh mines : witness his gathered congregations in Montgomery, Radnor, and Cardiganshire, abounding with visible converts, to whose ministry most in those assemblies have acknowledged themselves to owe their blessed change. They would attest the same unto the world by annexing hereto a list of their names, were it thought necessary : besides what success the Lord gave him formerly in London, Kent, and other places, where there remain many living monuments of his powerful ministry. Many, it is true, were filled with envy towards him ; yet being above discouragement, whilst he was permitted, he was still striving to follow his Master as near as he might, going about doing good continually, still labouring to cause the sleepy to wake, the deaf to hear, the blind to see, the lame to walk. Many of such good works did he do ; and for those was he stoned, esteemed and accounted as one of whom the world was not worthy.

CHAPTER IV.

MANIFOLD were the perils, buffetings, seizures, and imprisonments which Mr. Powell underwent in pleading Christ's cause and Gospel ; insomuch that it may truly be said of him, as the Apostle spake of himself, that in "all things he approved himself a Minister of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses ; in

stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings: by honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report, as a deceiver, yet true:" and (2 Cor. xi.) "in journeyings oft, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by his own countrymen, in perils in the city, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings oft, in hunger and thirst."

Once he was sorely beaten by two of his kinsmen, at Knocklas, in Radnorshire, for reproving them for sin, insomuch that his head and other parts swelled and grew black, being struck by one of them with a crabtree cudgel, and with a strong arm; and yet, to admiration, as he himself expresseth it, he felt it no more than if a child had struck him with a bulrush.

Another time, he was sorely beaten in Merionethshire.

Another time, a butcher at Vainvaire lay in wait in a narrow passage to take away his life, and assaulted him; but God strangely delivered him.

At another time, four men entered into an oath to kill him; but God strangely preserved him; and at the designed meeting, where they intended the mischief, one of them was convinced of the truth.

At another time, one came to a meeting where he preached, at Newtown, with a full purpose to kill him; but was at that time convinced and converted by the word, and confessed and begged pardon for his wickedness.

Another time, a man of Welchpool entered into an oath to kill him, and designed to attempt it at Guilsfield, where he preached ; but he was also at the same instant converted by the power of the word.

Another time, a woman came with a knife to kill him, as he was preaching in the market-place at Machynlleth, but was prevented.

At another time, at Dollgelly, in Merionethshire, as he was preaching, he was assaulted by a rude rabble, who with stones, swords, staves, and poleaxes, attempted him and many of his company ; but he was strangely delivered, though in their hands.

Not long after, in the same town, being indicted and acquitted at the assizes for a riot, upon the former business, a wicked fiddler was hired to kill him, who with a weapon under his coat attempted it twice, whilst he stood at the bar, but was prevented.

Another time, going to preach in Mallwyd kirkyard, several rude people assaulted him and his friends, where he was sorely beaten and bruised on his head.

A soldier shot a brace of bullets at him looking out of his prison window, in Montgomery ; but God preserved him.

Upon the taking of Anglesey, he was in the midst of the emeny, and particularly assaulted by one that knew him, wounded in the head, hand, and groin ; but God brought him off as before.

Four times he was delivered out of the hands of rob-

bers; and several strange preservations were vouchsafed him from perils by water, both in England and Wales; and wonderfully was he protected in seven dangerous falls from his horse, in his journeyings upon the Lord's service.

His first imprisonment was in Brecknockshire, about the year 1640, where he, being preaching in a house, was, about ten o'clock at night, scared, with fifty or sixty of his hearers, by fifteen or sixteen lewd fellows, pretending a warrant from Justice Williams; who took them forthwith away in the night, towards Builth, the said Justice's house; but in the way, meeting with a kirk and an alehouse, (too common yokefellows then in Wales,) they would have haled them into the alehouse, which they refused, and chose the kirk rather, where about midnight he went to prayer, sung a psalm, and taught from, "Fear not them that can kill the body," &c.; (Matt. x. 28;) and it was observed, that one of the chief and vilest of the troublers wept sorely. The next morning he was brought to the Justice's house, who not being at home at their first coming in, he betook himself to his Bible, and preached there again; whereat the Justice, when he came in, was much enraged, to find him at such work in his house; but two of his daughters, who seemed to relish the word, begged him not to do any thing against him and his companions; but such was his rage, that he presently committed them to the Constable's hands, who was so favourable as to permit

them freely to enjoy religious exercise and worship, which they did at the said town of Builth; and the neighbourhood generally attended, both that night and the next morning. The next day, the Justice sent for them again, to examine them further, having got two or three more Justices and six or seven Clergymen with him; when, after much conference and many threatenings, they were dismissed.

Another time, preaching at Launger, in Radnorshire, in a field, the public place not being able to contain the company, Mr. Hugh Lloyd, the High Sheriff, came with a band of men, and took him down out of the chair wherein he preached, and after examination committed him, and charged several Constables, fifteen or sixteen being present, to execute his mittimus: all but one refused, and that one took him into his custody, and undertook to convey him to prison. As he went with him, his house being in the way, the Constable permitted him to lodge at home that night. The Constable was so convinced, whilst he was at family duty, that he declared he could not go a step further with him, though it should cost him his life; being persuaded that he was one of the servants of Christ; and so took leave, and left him in his own house; though, because of the cruelty of the Justice, he durst not return home, but went for some time out of the country. Yet, to prevent damage to the man, but especially scandal to the Gospel, Mr. Powell bound himself with two sufficient sureties to

appear at the next assizes in Radnorshire; where he appeared accordingly; but, the Judges and Jury befriending him, he was acquitted: and the Judges afterwards inviting him to dinner, and desiring him to give thanks, one of them said it was the best grace he ever heard in his life; giving him great countenance; which proved much to the furtherance of the Gospel in those parts, to the great offence of the High Sheriff, who afterwards, upon the coming on of the war, persecuted him out of the country.

Being in London about the time that General Cromwell took upon him the supreme power, (so impartial was he, and so great a lover of justice, that, whatever had been the endeared friendship betwixt him and the General, yet) did he, on the day that Cromwell was proclaimed, (which was the 19th of December, 1653) witness against that action to those persons who were appointed to proclaim him. ✕

And on the said day, being Monday, did he, with others, preach at Blackfriars, where he also bore a public testimony against it. Upon the Wednesday, he and another were taken into custody by several messengers from the Council, and carried prisoners to Whitehall. Many friends came thither to accompany them, and observe the issue. During the time they attended in the outward rooms, Mr. Powell took occasion to preach to the people from a portion of Scripture; and in the midst of his discourse was sent for into the Council, and

committed prisoner for words spoken in Blackfriars. He continued in the custody of the messengers, till the last day of the same week, being the 24th of December, and then was, discharged. On the next day, in the afternoon, in Christ-church, Newgate, he preached from those words, "Then came one and told them, saying, Behold, the men whom ye put in prison are standing in the temple, and teaching the people." (Acts v. 25.)

He joined with several Christians in Wales in that letter and public testimony that was sent to Oliver Cromwell against his usurpation; which he understanding before it came up, caused a party of horse to be sent for him, and to be brought to his Major-General at Worcester. They took him at Aberbecham, in Montgomeryshire, on a day of fasting and prayer, and detained him some time a prisoner upon that account.

April 28th, 1660, early in the morning Mr. Powell dreamed that a company of soldiers were coming to take him prisoner. He no sooner awoke, and told his wife, than he heard, at some distance, either a carbine or a pistol discharged; which made him presently conclude, that his dream was true, and was then immediately to be fulfilled. Though he had opportunity enough to escape, yet he chose to stay, and to prepare himself for a prison. Therefore, as soon as the soldiers came into the house, he presented himself to them, and told them, he understood their design, and was as willing to go along with them, as they were to require him; and so by them he

was conducted to Salop, where he continued prisoner about nine weeks, and then, by an order of the King and Council, was released with the rest of his brethren.

Mr. Powell, being thus set at liberty, thought it was his duty to improve that mercy, by continuing to preach as he had done formerly; but the High Sheriff of the county of Montgomery sent to prohibit his meeting; and upon Mr. Powell's refusal to neglect the opportunity of serving God among his people, the High Sheriff wrote a letter to Secretary Morice, wherein he accused Mr. Powell of sedition, rebellion, and treason, and the like crimes; which, though untruly suggested, yet were that time easily believed; and he doubted not to procure power to imprison one who was represented so dangerous; but before any return came, (so willing are some men to be doing,) Mr. Sheriff directed a warrant to take Mr. Powell, and make him prisoner; which was accordingly done. He was confined several months; all ordinary ways of relief by law, allowed in such cases, being wholly obstructed.

After some months' stay, the sessions came; and after much importunity Mr. Powell was called; and instead of being released, or having any just cause rendered why he should still be continued in prison, the Oaths of Supremacy and Allegiance were tendered to him; and though he urged that it was necessary he should first be cleared of that which was already charged upon him, before he entered upon any new matter, especially since

those oaths were designed against the Papists, who, he saw, were spared, and of him, as to any inclinableness unto Popery, they had no suspicion; yet neither in this could he be heard; but upon his refusal of those oaths, so arbitrarily and unnecessarily tendered, he was again committed to prison, the Judge refusing to take any bail for him, till the next sessions.

But he had not long continued here, when, upon a false information returned against him, one of the messengers of the Council, Mr. Wickam, was sent down with a warrant to bring him before the King and the Council. He was brought a few days following; and whilst he was waiting at the Council door, a Cavalier Captain, one of his own county, came to Mr. Powell, and upbraided him, advising him to run away, for that would be his best course; to whom he replied, before all the other company, that God had made him to stand, when he and his companions the Cavaliers had run away; to which no answer was made, neither by that Captain, nor by any of the company; but after six or seven hours' waiting, one of the Clerks of the Council came with a warrant in his hands, which he delivered to the messenger, to carry Mr. Powell prisoner to the Fleet, where he was detained almost two years; and for above twelve months of that time, he was in so close a confinement that he was not suffered to go out of his chamber door; which, together with the offensive smell of a dunghill, which was just before his window, so

much impaired his health, that he never after perfectly recovered it.

CHAPTER V.

WHILST Mr. Powell was thus a prisoner in the Fleet, his enemies could not satisfy themselves by exercising cruelty upon his body, but they also endeavoured to take away his good name and credit, by spreading a report, that he was in prison there for a great part of the revenue of the tithes of Wales. From which aspersion, though many worthy persons had formerly cleared him by a book printed in the year 1653, called *Examen et Purgamen Vavoseris*; yet, not knowing how far such a report might influence to the reproach of the Gospel, Mr. Powell then wrote a brief narrative concerning the proceedings of the Commissioners in Wales against the ejected Clergy; and therein, as knowing his own integrity, he defied all his enemies to prove the least tittle of that slander. To this vindication no reply was ever put, nor indeed can be made: since all that knew Mr. Powell must affirm this of him, that very few in this self-seeking age were more of the primitive temper, in seeking the souls rather than the goods of others; which, though pressed upon him with much importunity, he often refused. So far was he from desiring unjustly to enrich himself, that he voluntarily quitted the opportunity of justly doing it.

Having now spent almost two years in the Fleet, there

came a sudden order for the sending away of him and Colonel Rich; which, without giving them so much as two hours' time to provide for themselves, was executed upon them on the last day of September, 1662; and in the Duke of York's pleasure-boat, whereof Captain Lambert was Commander, they were both conveyed to South-sea Castle, by Portsmouth, where Mr. Powell continued about five years, not being restored till the removal of the Lord Chancellor Hyde opened a door for him (as for many other prisoners) to sue for his Habeas Corpus; and so at length he obtained his liberty.

Mr. Powell, after his release out of South-sea Castle, had scarcely his liberty ten months, when, passing from Bristol through some parts of Monmouthshire, and having in that county several opportunities in divers places to preach the Gospel,—people of all sorts, as well profane as professors, showing much willingness to embrace the same,—he, judging it his duty, passed out of Monmouthshire into a place called Merthyr, lying in the mountainous parts of Glamorganshire, where he found in the churchyard a great congregation of people waiting to hear the word of God; to whom, after prayer, he spake from Jer. xvii. 7, 8: from which scripture he showed, first, who was a blessed man; and, secondly, wherein his blessedness consisted.

But whilst he was endeavouring to do the Lord's work, the Clergyman posted away in the time of the sermon to Cardiff, which was about twelve or fourteen

miles off; and it being at the end of the Quarter Sessions there, he found but two of the Deputy-Lieutenants in the town, to whom he made complaint and information. If one of those Deputy-Lieutenants may be credited, he said that the said Vavasor, and the congregation to which he preached, were met near two miles from that place, and many of them armed; both which were false.

Upon this information, those two Deputy-Lieutenants, and Dr. B., an officer in the Bishop's Court, granted their order to the Major of the militia, requiring him to take to his assistance military officers and others, and to apprehend, attach, and bring the said Vavasor Powell to His Majesty's gaol at Cardiff; and the keeper of the gaol, and his deputy and deputies, were required to receive and detain the said Vavasor Powell in safe and close custody, until he should be delivered by due course of law: but showing no particular ground at all in the said commitment, but letters received from the Earl of Carbery, Lord-Lieutenant of North and South Wales; which letters, Dr. B. himself confessed afterwards, were written by him, and bore date in the year 1665, and made no mention (as others the Deputy-Lieutenants confess) of Vavasor Powell's name; and if they had, yet he was at that time, and several years before, a prisoner, and in November, 1667, was set at liberty by order from the King and his Council, to which order the Deputy-Lieutenant's (namely, the Earl of Carbery's) own hand is affixed. Let any unbiassed person, nay, the worst enemy, be judge of the illegality and irrationality of this

action, of which it seems those two Deputy-Lieutenants, who committed the prisoner, were themselves suspicious; and, therefore, a more general meeting of the Deputy-Lieutenants was appointed at Cowbridge, October 17th, whither the prisoner was commanded to come. There were present six of the Deputy-Lieutenants, and in the room the Major C. aforementioned, with some other gentlemen. The prisoner being called in, Dr. B. questioned him, who, it seems, was appointed to manage the conference with the prisoner. Here is the sum of it impartially set down.

Dr. B.—Mr. Powell, what business had you in this country?

Mr. P.—Sir, that had been proper to have been asked me before you committed me: however, I am not unwilling to give you an account thereof. Having several occasions to go to Bath and Bristol, and particularly an intent to drink of a well that is good against a distemper I am troubled with, the stone, I came into Monmouthshire, and so through some parts of this county, intending to travel towards my own habitation; and, Sir, I think I may as well travel through the country as another traveller, being no vagabond or suspicious person.

Dr. B.—But were not you in Newport, and in other places in Monmouthshire, preaching?

Mr. P.—Sir, I perceive you are a Doctor of the civil law; and there is a maxim in that law, *Nemo tenetur seipsum accusare*, “No man is bound to accuse himself:” but, Sir, I am neither ashamed nor afraid to own what I

did; for it was but what I am commanded to do by my Lord and Master, Christ, to wit, to preach his Gospel.

Dr. B.—What authority have you to preach?

Mr. P.—Sir, I have sufficient authority.

Dr. B.—From whom?

Mr. P.—From God and men.

Dr. B.—Are you in orders?

Mr. P.—Sir, if by orders you mean to be ordained, and appointed to be a Minister, I am.

Dr. B.—From whom had you your ordination?

Mr. P.—I have told you already, from God and men; and, Sir, you are none of my Bishop, to catechise and examine me; and, therefore, ask me such questions as it belongs to you to ask, and me to answer; and, Sir, since you do not, I desire to know by what law you proceed against me, so as to imprison and detain me without any proof against me, or examination of me first?

Dr. B.—Sir, you have broken the law by preaching without orders; and you came with some hundred, yea, a thousand, horsemen with you into Newport; and the Mayor of Newport came hither to complain against you.

Mr. P.—It is true I came to Newport, and preached there; but, Sir, that is not in your county, nor under your cognizance: yet I shall satisfy you that the report you heard was false; for there came with me about four or five horsemen; and if I preached, it was not without the Mayor's consent, as several credible gentlemen will attest, if need be.

Dr. B.—But you had a conventicle at Merthyr where

were abundance of people, they say a thousand at least, and some of them armed.

Mr. P.—Sir, we had a Christian meeting at Merthyr, but no conventicle: for, Sir, a conventicle is so named, from *convenire in malum*; and your law saith it is a meeting together under pretence of religious worship and service, to plot or design evil against the King and his Government. But our meeting was no such meeting, for we did not pretend to worship God, but did it really, namely, pray, preach and hear God's word, and it appears that there was no such intention in our meeting, for after the exercise we all departed peaceably towards our several habitations. And, whereas you say some were armed, your information is not true, for there were not any that I saw, and, I believe, none had any more than walking-staves or riding-rods in their hands.

Dr. B.—But yet this was a transgression of the law.

Mr. P.—I am sure it is no transgression of the law or command of Christ, who commands his Gospel to be preached to every creature; neither, Sir, do I know this to be any transgression of the law of the land. If it be, it is, and has been for many months tolerated generally throughout the nation; and I myself have enjoyed my liberty, both in London and other countries, without molestation. Notwithstanding, I have been where persons are as knowing and zealous for the laws as you are or can be; and I supposed I might as well have done the like in this county especially, hearing of the moderation of the gentlemen of these parts.

Dr. B.—What we do, we do in reference to the laws: we are sworn and bound to keep them.

Mr. P.—Sir, if you do things with reference to the laws, you must be impartial therein, and observe the rules of the law, together with the true intent of it, which is not to punish the good, but the evil; and you would do well to put the laws in execution against drunkards, swearers, Sabbath-breakers, Papists, and other offenders and malefactors.

Dr. B.—(The Doctor, turning to the rest of the gentlemen, saith,) Do you hear how he charges us with neglect of executing the laws, &c.?

Mr. P.—Sir, I do not charge you; but I say, you would do well to put the laws in execution against such transgressors as I have mentioned.

Dr. B.—Do we not do it?

Mr. P.—Sir, your own consciences and the country know what you do therein. But, Sir, I desire again to know what law do you charge the breach of on me, and by which you imprison me.

Then the Doctor called to his man to reach him a bag that had some writings in it, which he drew out, and took first the Act made against conventicles by the Parliament, and gave it Mr. Powell, and asked him whether he had seen it. "Yes," said Powell, "I have seen and considered it."

Dr. B.—Well, what say you to it?

Mr. P.—First, I answer, as I did before, that our meeting was no conventicle, nor a private, but a public

meeting. Secondly, that it is the opinion of divers learned Lawyers, that that Act is now out of date, as seen by the last proviso therein; and I was upon that Act before a learned Lawyer and Justice of Peace, who understood it in that sense, and discharged me. But, thirdly, it is apparent you have not proceeded with me according to that Act, for you have apprehended me in my lodging a day after, and not in the exercise. Again, your order and commitment was not as you were Justices of the Peace, but Deputy-Lieutenants; and so your officer, Major Carn, when I desired to see his authority, laid his hand upon his sword, and said that was his authority. Again, Sir, be pleased, with the rest of you gentlemen, to consider that my commitment is not grounded upon that Act, but upon the Lord-Lieutenant's letters written several years before, when I was in prison elsewhere; and yet in November last, by order from the King and his Council (to which order the Lord-Lieutenant's hand is affixed), I was set at liberty.

Dr. B.—But we did not know that.

Mr. P.—Then, Sir, I make it known to you now.

Dr. B.—But were you set at liberty in November last?

Mr. P.—Yes, Sir, that I was.

Dr. B.—But had you no hand in the plot in the north?

Mr. P.—No, Sir, nor head neither; nor did I hear of it till a while after it was discovered.

Dr. B.—I am sure you were then charged with it.

Mr. P.—So I have been with many other things that

are false; but, gentlemen, I desire you to take notice how groundless that report was by this instance: I was committed prisoner in the year 1660, and continued till November, 1667, in several prisons, whereof the five last years in South-sea Castle, near Portsmouth; and in the year that the plot was, I was so sick that I kept my bed most part of it, much more likely to die than to live, as the Governor and other gentlemen there can testify. (Then the Doctor gave Mr. Powell a letter which the King wrote to the Archbishop, containing direction what doctrine Preachers should preach, forbidding to meddle with the doctrine of reprobation, controversies, matters of Government, &c., and asked Mr. Powell whether he saw that.)

Mr. P.—No, Sir, I do not remember that I saw it. (Dr. B. then gave it to Mr. Powell to read, who, after he had read it, returned it, and said,)

Sir, this letter doth not concern me, but such Ministers as are settled in the parishes, which the Bishops are to see they do accordingly, but I am none of them; yet there is something in the letter which makes for me, because I do, in my preaching, preach the Gospel and against sin, and do not meddle with controversies, as that letter directs.

Dr. B.—But here is another letter upon that, written by my Lord Chancellor.

Mr. P.—What Lord Chancellor do you mean, Chancellor Hyde?

Dr. B.—Yes.

Mr. P.—Sir, I shall not show that respect as to receive, much less to read, the letter of one that would have betrayed his King and country; and I wonder how you dare now mention his name. (Thereupon some of the other Deputy-Lieutenants smiled and covered their faces.)

Dr. B.—What say you of the Canons of the Church? The twentieth Canon forbids men to preach without orders.

Mr. P.—Sir, what have I to do with your Canons, which are not established by law? You know, Sir, that it is the opinion of many learned gentlemen of the long robe, as well as others, that not only your Canons are without force, but that your Episcopal Courts have no power to impose oaths upon persons.

Dr. B.—But there are others of a contrary opinion.

Mr. P.—Then, Sir, let that matter rest, till it be determined by wiser men than we are.

Dr. B.—But what say you of the doctrine of the Church of England, contained in the thirty-nine Articles?

Mr. P.—For the Articles that concern the doctrine of the Church (mark, I say the Articles that concern the doctrine thereof, I say not the discipline), I hold them to be generally sound, and consonant to God's word; and I am more for them than most of your prelatial and parochial Ministers.

Dr. B.—When were you at the public worship?

Mr. P.—What public worship do you mean, Sir? The public worship of God?

Dr. B.—The public worship of the Church.

Mr. P.—What, Sir, do you make a difference between the public worship of God, and the public worship of the Church? If by public worship you mean prayer, preaching, reading the Scriptures, singing of psalms, &c., it is my practice to be, as often as I can, at that worship. (Here again the the Doctor was at a stand, and replied not; but some other few passages passed between them, which the relator remembers not. Then the chief of the Deputy-Lieutenants, S. E. M., very civilly and mildly desired Mr. Powell to withdraw, and they would consider his case.)

Mr. P.—Sir, I will; but, first, I crave leave to speak a few words, which I humbly leave to your consideration. I am, though your countryman, yet a stranger, having been not above twice before in your county, and at this time but one day only, and that in passing. I have been taken in my lodging, and committed prisoner without any just ground that hath been yet objected: there is neither sedition, treason, nor any other crime laid to my charge; the ground specified in my commitment I have already showed to be a mistake, which I have rectified. All that is pretended against me is, that I preached a sermon in Merthyr, in this county, to a poor, willing people, against which sermon there is no exception made; and seeing it is so, I desire you to consider, and seriously to weigh, whether you do well to imprison me on such account, especially since there is such a general toleration (at least, connivance) of such things now throughout the nation, and I myself have

found it in divers other places; and having heard of the moderation of you gentlemen of this county, I was emboldened so much the more to preach the word of the Lord, hoping to have furtherance, and no hinderance, from you therein. I bless God, I am not ashamed of what I have done, nor afraid of men, having looked so many men, and death, in the face so oft: and therefore the will of the Lord be done concerning me; though I would desire you to consider the words of Christ, "With the same judgment that ye judge, ye shall be judged;" and be sure, as the Apostle saith, "that he that sheweth judgment without mercy, shall find judgment without mercy."

Dr. B.—If you think we wrong you, you may remove yourself by a Habeas Corpus.

Mr. P.—Doctor, when you have done your worst, I must do my best; but I wish the Lord may forgive you the injury you do me and others. Gentlemen, if I have said anything amiss or provoking, being to speak to things suddenly, I would desire that that may be no cause of any other proceedings than you intended, but look into the true cause of my sufferings. (Then he went out.)

The Deputy-Lieutenants had some hot discourse before dinner about it, and it was supposed the most part of them were inclining to release the prisoner; but, as it seems, some false report was sent out of Monmouthshire against him, concerning some words that the prisoner spoke in a sermon in that county, which being afterwards

inquired into, was found false ; and Dr. B. himself said, if that apostate that raised the report were in his county, he would bind him to his good behaviour. Yet that, with the earnest instigation of Dr. B., prevailed so far that when the prisoner was called again before sunset, most of the gentlemen were moved against the prisoner, some judged because the Doctor misrepresented a passage of the prisoner mentioned before, and spoken only to the Doctor, namely, that when he had done his worst, he told them the prisoner bade them all do their worst, which he neither said nor intended. But others supposed that wine had prevailed so far over some of them (as too oft it doth), as to make them now speak the fastest, who had not a word in the morning to say ; and thus, in a great confusion, the prisoner, with threatening words, and strict charge given to the jailer, was again remanded and committed ; and in his going forth he said, “Gentlemen, what you have done I submit willingly to, being no more troubled at it than at this hair” (and so drew one of his hairs), “and my prayer shall be for you, that you may find more mercy from God than I have found from you. But that God whom I serve is able to save me.”

This meeting being ended, they put the prisoner under a new commitment, which was drawn before by the Doctor, or his clerk, as some saw it in the next room.

Hereupon the Deputy-Lieutenants, it seems, wrote a letter to the Lord-Lieutenant Carbery, to signify what they had done ; and they received an answer from him

to render them thanks, and to detain the prisoner till further order. Thereupon, on the 30th of October, there were two new commitments again upon the prisoner, one subscribed by two of the Deputy-Lieutenants, commanding the prisoner to be kept in safe custody till further orders from the Deputy-Lieutenants of this county, who subscribed the warrant of his commitment at Cowbridge. The other commitment by five, to keep him in safe custody till they did receive further orders from their Lord-Lieutenant. To both these commitments Dr. B.'s hand is set, both bearing the same date, namely, Oct. 30th, 1668.

CHAPTER VI.

UPON the 8th day of November, 1668, Sir John A., Knight, and Dr. W. B., Esq., came to the Angel Inn, in Cardiff, and sent for Mr. Vavasor Powell to come to them, which he did accordingly.

Dr. B.—We have received an order from the Council to tender you the Oaths of Allegiance and Supremacy.

Mr. P.—Gentlemen, if that be your business, I pray you let me return to my prison again; for I am committed already; and I think it is neither regular nor usual to tender them to a prisoner: you should either before my commitment, especially before presentment or indictment against me, have done it, or upon examination; or have convicted and indicted me first, and then tendered them. And so the prisoner went towards the door, intending to return to the prison. Thereupon Dr. B. went between him and the door, and said, “Nay,

stay, Sir ; you shall not be gone ;” and so called for some of the under-officers, or deputies.

Mr. P.—Sir, though I might have continued in my prison, and not have come hither, and may yet choose whether I stay or no ; yet, as I was willing to show that respect to you in coming, so to express my readiness to answer any thing that may be objected against me, I do not mean to depart without leave.

Dr. B.—Come, Mr. Powell, will you take the oaths ? for we have an order from some of the Council, and my Lord Keeper, to tender them to you.

Mr. P.—Sir, I desire to see your order.

Sir J. A.—Let him see it.

Dr. B.—No, he shall not see it.

Mr. P.—Sir, you may choose ; but if you have such an order, it would be civility in you, and some satisfaction to me, to let me see it.

Dr. B.—We might have tendered the oaths to you at the last meeting.

Mr. P.—For it had been more proper for you to have done it before you had committed me, than either then or now. But, Doctor, you have at first dealt very illegally, by committing me without cause, or colour of cause ; and so run yourself into a præmunire ; and ever since, your work hath been to seek to set things right ; but all the while you do wrong me and the truth. The Lord forgive you !

Dr. B.—If I have wronged you, I have an estate to answer : question me for it.

Mr. P.—Though I might do so, yet I bless God that I am a Christian; and my principle, as well as my practice, is, rather to forgive wrongs, than otherwise; leaving and committing my cause to God, who will plead it: but, Doctor, you are so transported with zeal against those people who are called fanatics, that you forget law and reason.

Dr. B.—Wherein?

Mr. P.—You forget law when you commit a man before any examination either of him or against him: and it is against reason to commit a man to prison by virtue of letters from the Lord-Lieutenant, which were dated four or five years ago, when I was elsewhere a prisoner, and discharged within the year by an order from the King and his Council, to which order the Lord-Lieutenant's own hand is affixed.

Dr. B.—The letters were not of so long a date; for they were dated in the year 1665.

Mr. P.—Mark that, gentlemen, (said Powell to them that stood by,) he himself confessed those letters were written in the year 1665, which is at least two years ago; and my order plainly shows (bearing date December, 1667) that I was set at liberty long after the date of those letters.

Dr. B.—Well, will you take the oaths, yea, or no? for we must return your answer.

Mr. P.—I pray you let me know whether my liberty depends upon the taking or refusing of them.

Sir John A. and the Town-clerk would persuade Mr.

P. to take the oaths, and then he should know.

Mr. P.—If I may not know that, I may as well forbear declaring whether I will take them or no, since I am a prisoner already.

Dr. B.—But you must give a positive answer, whether you will or will not take them; therefore let us know what your answer is.

Mr. P.—Since you press me so much, my answer is this, that I have taken them already; and I conceive I am not bound by the law to take them again: that is my answer.

Then Sir John A. made some sign to the Doctor to show Mr. Powell the oaths in the Statute-book. The Doctor sought them, but could not readily find them. Then the Town-clerk went to help him; and one of them said, the Oath of Allegiance was in *decimo sexto Jacobi*; the other Doctor said it was in another place; but neither of them knew where.

Mr. P.—Gentlemen, are you so unacquainted with the law? The Oath of Allegiance which you look for is in *tertio Jacobi*; and there you find the occasion of it, which was the Gunpowder Treason; and that oath was never intended so much against Protestants (though Nonconformists) as against Popish recusants; and yet which of them have it imposed upon them, or are imprisoned for want of taking it?

Dr. B.—Well, will you take them? Here they are, and we tender them to you.

Mr. P.—I have answered you already, and need give

you no other. Yet, I will say more. If you can prove that you have power to tender both the oaths to me, and that I am in either of those capacities, that the statutes *primo* or *quinto* Eliz. mention, I will take them; but I know you cannot.

Sir J. A. and Dr. B.—Well, will you put that answer under your hand? Tender Mr. Powell paper.

Mr. P.—I am free to put it under my hand; but you may, if you please, return my answer, if you must return any at all. (But Sir John A. and the Doctor could not agree in that particular, how Mr. Powell should do it.)

Dr. B.—But we have power to give that oath to you.

Mr. P.—Sir, if you have, I say again, I will take it: therefore peruse that statute. (Sir John A. looked into the statute, and spake somewhat to the Doctor privately, which, it seems by the Doctor's answer to him, was that they could not; for the Doctor's answer was, "But we can.")

Dr. B.—But why are not you bound as well as others?

Mr. P.—Because that the statute directs the oath to be taken by officers, ecclesiastical and civil, and such as were to receive public profits, and other persons mentioned both in that and the other statute of the fifth of Elizabeth; and though I may be looked upon as an ecclesiastical person, yet it appertains to the Bishop to give it me.

Dr. B.—Are you a Minister ordained?

Mr. P.—I have heretofore told you I was.

Dr. B.—But by whom?

Mr. P.—Did not I tell you by God and men.

Dr. B.—Ay, you mean the man Christ?

Mr. P.—If I did so, my meaning is right; but I mean by such men as he hath appointed.

Dr. B.—Come, come, your conscience tells you, that you care for a Bishop no more than another man.

Mr. P.—That is true enough, I care for him and you alike; yet, of the two, I respect you more, being a civil Magistrate.

Dr. B.—But will you take them? Answer yea, or no. (And with several other words the Doctor urged Mr. Powell again.)

Mr. P.—If you must have yet a more positive answer, since you will neither let me see the order requiring me to take them, nor show me that the law, which ought to be your rule, doth impose them upon me, though I do not absolutely and peremptorily refuse them, yet I will not take them now. (Here Dr. B. interrupted Mr. Powell in his speech, and cried out to some present to bear witness, that he said he would not take them. Thereupon one in the room said, "I do bear witness.")

Mr. P.—Sir (said he to the Doctor), you deal very disingenuously to catch at atantages, when none are given, and to abstract and separate my words; and, Sir, (said he to the other man,) you are also very uncivil to bear witness before you hear me out. (And so Mr. Powell turned him to Sir John A., and said,) I desire you would both hear, and observe what I say, and intended to say, but that I was interrupted: that since I

have taken the oaths already, and that I shall not know upon what terms I am to take them again, and the law requires it not from me, I will not take them at this time, but will take further time to consider thereof.

Thereupon the Doctor went down stairs, and so Mr. Powell departed; and as he was going with the deputy-keeper, the Doctor bade the keeper keep him safe.

Mr. P.—(Turning to the Doctor.) I would have you know, that neither my principles, nor cause, put any necessity upon me to make an escape; but I hope I shall be able to stand when you fall. (Meaning in the great judgment, and so went to his prison again.)

On the 13th of January, 1668, in the afternoon, the jailer was commanded to bring the prisoner to the bar, before Sir John A., Knight, H.H., and Dr. W. B., Esquires. Sir John A. spake to the prisoner to this purpose:—

Sir John A.—Mr. Powell, you have, by order of the Council, had the Oaths of Allegiance and Supremacy already tendered unto you; and now we tender them again unto you. Will you take them?

Mr. P.—Sir, I desire leave of you and the rest of the Bench, as necessarily previous to my answer, that I may be satisfied first in two questions. 1. In what capacity do the law and you look upon me, whether as a public or private person? If as a private person (as I suppose it, and you do), then one of these oaths, by law, cannot be tendered to me. 2. What tender do you count this, whether a first or a second? I have just cause to pro-

pound this question, for one of you that sits upon that bench, as I am credibly informed, from one that hath seen his letter, hath informed the Council, or some of them, that the oaths have been tendered twice before now to me, and that I refused them, with other thing as false; so that my taking of them now would be but, as the poet said, "to take the buckler after I am wounded." (Hereupon the Doctor, knowing himself to be guilty, broke out into several hasty expressions, all tending to silence the prisoner, and commanding that the oaths be showed him; and if he would not take them, let the jailer take him.)

Mr. P.—Sir, it doth not become a man of your learning or place to be so angry; and the wrath of man doth not effect the righteousness of God. Sir, if you will be Dr. Saul, to persecute the truth and people of God as you do, I hope I shall be as Deacon Stephen, to stand up for them; and, Doctor, if you please, let you and I, either according to law or reason, discourse this point, and let the Bench and Court judge thereof.

Hereupon Dr. B. went away to fetch a lawyer, as they said, to answer him, insomuch that some of the people called him Dr. Fury, which was afterwards fathered upon Mr. Powell, though he did not say so.

Sir John A., and the other two Justices, moved Mr. Powell to take the oaths again.

Mr. P.—I beseech you, gentlemen, give me leave to speak a few words first, and then I shall directly answer you, whether I can take them, yea or no. (There being

a little silence, he went on, and said,) These two oaths were framed and imposed, as I suppose you well know, the first of them, namely, the Oath of Supremacy, in the first year of Queen Elizabeth, immediately after that hot persecution of the Papists in Queen Mary's days; and it was, no doubt, intended chiefly against Papists, and to be a test and trial of all persons that were admitted into, or continued in any public offices, either temporal or ecclesiastical. The Oath of Allegiance, or Obedience, was imposed upon that notorious act, the Gunpowder Treason, and the substance of both of them is to acknowledge the Queen or King of England to be the supreme Magistrate of these kingdoms, and that no Prince or foreign power had any right thereto; nor the Pope, nor any other, had power to dissolve or discharge any subject from his obedience to the Queen or King; and this power I do freely and heartily acknowledge; and so far I do here declare, if it gives you satisfaction.

Justices said,—No; you must take the oaths as they are tendered.

Mr. P.—Why may not that satisfy you which satisfied the King and his Council? For in my case, stated and presented to them the last day before my discharge, I signified that I was not free in conscience to take those oaths in the way they are now tendered, and yet they were pleased to grant me their order for my discharge.

Sir John A.—But they did not know you refused the oaths.

Mr. P.—Yes, Sir, they did, as you may see, if you

please to look upon this copy of my case, which I presented to them, and which I desire you to read, and their order for my discharge. (Mr. Powell tendered them the copy, which they refused to receive.)

Justices.—But we have an order from the King and his Council, requiring you to take the oaths.

Mr. P.—Sir, that order was procured by false information against me to the Council, which is punishable by the law. But I pray you let me see the order, that I may know what it requires, and comport myself with their command as far as I can.

Sir John A.—No, we will not show it.

Mr. P.—Sir John, the last time I was before you, you would have had the Doctor to show it; and why should you now be against it?

Dr. B.—Tender them unto him; the Oath of Allegiance first.

Mr. P.—Do you require no more than the taking of that? and shall the taking thereof be, as the Apostle saith of an oath, an end of the strife?

Justices.—Do you take that first, and you shall know that afterwards.

Mr. P.—Doth my liberty depend upon taking or not taking it?

Justices.—Do you take it?

Mr. P.—Gentlemen, you deal very strictly and severely; for as our learned casuists and Divines, as Dr. Sanderson, Mr. Perkins and others say, “in taking an oath, men must take it with respect to the glory of God,

a man's own advantage, or the good of another ;" but as you tender this, I cannot see how I do either, if I take it, for this ordinance of God is made a snare to me, for I am, as a martyr said, imprisoned without cause, and now this is made a cause of detaining me there. Be pleased, gentlemen, to give me leave, without offence, to put you in mind of some words in your own commission, several times reiterated, that you are to execute justice according to the law and custom of England. The law of England does not require that men should take the oaths as often as every Magistrate pleases to tender them, for, as Lord Coke, who was the glory of the law, shows in the seventh book of his Reports, a man is bound to take the Oath of Allegiance but once in his life-time. And for the custom of England, it is not usual to imprison a man without cause, as I have been ; nor to impose upon men oaths, when and whilst they are prisoners, unless they desire their liberty upon the account of taking them.

Dr. B.—(Upon this Dr. B. came in again, and said, as some report,) Why do you suffer him to bark at the Bench ? (But that neither Mr. P., nor several others present, heard.) Why do you suffer him to speak, and show contempt to His Majesty ? He hath said that neither the King nor his Council had power to tender him the oath.

Mr. P.—Sir, I wonder how you dare speak so, and wrong me publicly before the Bench and the Court. I appeal to them, or either of them, or any here present, whether I spake any such thing, or any word tending

thereto. (At which all were silent, knowing it was a false accusation, as one of the officers of the Court, no friend to Mr. P., afterwards confessed, but wished he had spoken it, that they might have had such an advantage against him. But hereupon the Doctor again went out in a fume, and came in no more.)

The three Justices remaining prayed Mr. Powell again to take them, and would suffer him no longer to speak, but bade one of the officers of the Court show him the oaths, and give him the Bible, bidding him lay his hand on the Bible.

Mr. P.—To what end do you tender me the Bible? I am not to swear by the Bible, but by God himself, and in that manner which his word directs.

Justices.—The law requires you should do it in this manner.

Mr. P.—What law?

Justice H.—The law of the land.

Mr. P.—Which law of the land? There is the Common Law, the Statute Law, and the Civil Law. I have not read that by any of these the laying of the hand on a book is absolutely required, or essential to an oath.

Justice H.—Yea, the law doth require it.

Mr. P.—I pray you, Sir, what law? Be pleased to instance in these Acts, by which the oaths are enjoined. There is no such ceremony required here, nor I suppose by another law. (To this neither he nor any other replied.)

Another Justice H.—It is the common practice; and

why should you differ from it?

Mr. P.—Sir, common practice is not my rule; but what is grounded upon God's word, or good reason, I shall observe.

Sir J. A.—Come, let us trouble ourselves no further. He refuses to take them.

Mr. P.—I desire all the Court to take notice, that I have not refused to take the oaths, but having taken them already, I am not bound to take them again, and that they are not tendered me according to law. (Then the Justices commanded the jailer to take the prisoner away.)

Mr. P.—Gentlemen, since I may not be further heard about the oaths, I desire to be heard in somewhat else. Will you be pleased to take sufficient bail till the next Sessions? (The Justices were silent. The jailer made answer publicly, No.)

Mr. P.—Sir, are you one of the Justices of the Court, that your "No" should stand? Gentlemen, I have been near eight years a prisoner, and in thirteen prisons, and yet in all these I have not received so much incivility as from this man, Mr. jailer; and, therefore, I desire liberty to take a private chamber in the town, giving security for my true imprisonment. (To this the Justices returned no answer, but commanded the jailer to take the prisoner away, which was done accordingly, and he was returned to the prison.)

About three months after this a friend in London got a *Habeas Corpus*, to remove him to the Common Pleas

bar, which the Sheriff refused to obey. Then came an *Alias*, under penalty of an £100, upon which they sent him up, but would not let him know of his journey beforehand. But about eight o'clock, one night, the Under Sheriff came to give him notice to be gone in half an hour, and so took him with a guard eight miles that night, being the 16th of October, 1669, and brought him to Westminster, to the Common Pleas bar, the 22nd of the same. Upon the examination of the return, it was found illegal; but S. M., their Counsel, pleaded that he had not had time to view it, and desired time till next day, which the Judges granted. Thereupon, Mr. Powell moved the Court to take bail then, and discharge his guard, which had been granted; but that S. M. said, "No, my Lord, then he will go and preach." To which the prisoner replied that it was as lawful for him to preach as for him to talk there at the bar. The next day he was brought into the Court again, and the return was again argued, the prisoner having the liberty to open his case himself; and though the return was, by all the Judges, deemed false and illegal, yet was Mr. Powell committed to the Fleet prison by the Court, where he remained from May 24th, 1669, till he was discharged by death.

On September 25th, being the first day of the week, he preached in the forenoon and afternoon, many being admitted to hear him, and that with much life and zeal; first, from those words, "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me, I will in

no wise cast out." (John vi. 37.) And in the afternoon from Hosea xiv. 8, "I am like a green fir tree; from me is thy fruit found." These were the last sermons he ever preached. At night he was weary, as he used to be, and took some refreshment after his exercise, and rested well that night. But in the morning, after he was up, he found himself not well; and as his manner was, he tried, by drinking plain posset, to provoke himself to vomit, and so went to his study as aforetime. In the afternoon came a friend, who desired that he would meet him in London the fifth day after, about some business of concernment, which he promised to do. The next day, and day following, his distemper increasing, some friends judged it inconvenient for him to go to London as he had promised, and therefore dissuaded him what they could; but as it was to do some service for some of the Lord's people, he said he would trust God with his preservation; and upon the fifth day went accordingly by water to the Temple stairs, wrapped warm; but upon landing he found himself unable well to go, which constrained him to take coach, and that shook him very much; but he came to his friend's house and dispatched his business.

That night he took one of Matthews's pills, and slept very well; but in the morning, after he was up, and had broken his fast, he fell very sick, and vomited; yet, afterwards, he was somewhat better again. He then wrote a letter to a friend in Wales, telling him that he was not well, and that this might be the last letter he

should ever write to him ; and so it was. He returned that evening to his prison, and, upon going to bed, found his distemper grow upon him, which so continued the next day as to cause him to keep his bed. The next morning, being the Lord's day, several friends came to see him, and would needs send for a Doctor, though he was not very free thereto. When the Doctor came he appointed him several things, and read his bill to him, which he approved, but told the Doctor that he had no medicine for mortality, saying that his days were accomplished. Notwithstanding all administrations, very little check could be given to his complaint for ten days, though various means were used, and such as had been blessed to help others in his case. Afterwards his health improved, so that there was great hope of his recovery, though himself said otherwise all along. The Doctor ordered that he should be kept from speaking much ; but so zealously was he affected for the glory of God, and with the love of Christ, that neither his pains, nor bodily weakness, nor the tender advice of friends could possibly restrain him. Notwithstanding all, he brake forth into high and heavenly praises, sometimes by prayer, sometimes by singing. His patience under all his pains was very great. When there came one of his greatest paroxysms, he would bless God, and say that he would not entertain one hard thought of God for all the world.

The sight of the pardon of sin and reconciliation with God was so clear, and without interruption, even to the last, that it was as a fire in his bosom till he spake of it ;

and very hardly would he be restrained at any time. When he had spent his strength in speaking, then would he compose himself to get a little more strength, that he might go on to speak further of the grace of God towards him, and to give seasonable advice to all about him; and so continued till God took away his strength and speech from him.

The thrush grew so sore in his mouth that he could speak no more to be understood, and yet then, by signs, he would signify that all was well within. He enjoyed his understanding to the last, which, he said, he had begged of God. His remembrance of God's people, and his prayers for them, were very frequent, and particularly for his Christian friends in Wales. He earnestly desired the saints to be of one mind. Some that were frequent with him in his sickness, say that such an earnest of glory their eyes and ears never heard nor ever saw before. He kept his bed a month within one day, and so finished his course, service, and suffering, at four o'clock in the afternoon, upon October 27th, 1670, at Karoone-house, then the Fleet prison, in Lambeth.

A FEW OF HIS DEATH-BED EXPRESSIONS, COLLECTED
BY SOME FRIENDS THAT WERE ABOUT HIM.

He blessed God that he had not withdrawn the light of his countenance, nor left him to be buffeted by Satan, nor to the love of anything in the world, to make him desire to live here any longer.

He said, "Three things I did design in the whole course of my life, namely, to be clear in the righteousness of Christ for justification, that I might exalt the grace of God to poor sinners, and admire it to my own soul.

"Secondly, to be sincerely to God what I did seem to be to man, that I might be upright in what I did, and really that which I did profess.

"Thirdly, that I might walk answerably to the love and grace of God, which he hath bestowed upon me. The two first I have much endeavoured, but the last I have been very short in.

"My principle was to promote holiness, love, and union among the saints; and have sometimes denied myself in my own judgment, that so I might have an opportunity to promote other truths among different brethren.

"During these thirty years that God hath wrought upon me, I do not remember that ever I had one hard thought of him, nor repent me that I made a profession, notwithstanding all my reproaches and sufferings. I have had much cause to wonder at Jesus Christ, that hath called me, an undone sinner, and counted me, me a vile wretch, worthy to suffer anything for his name's sake;" and this he spoke with much brokenness of heart.

"I have been much considering, since I was upon my sick bed, how the Lord Jesus, whilst upon the earth, acted towards poor sinners; and am satisfied that it is a great fault among churches and Christians, that they have no more pity and bowels to poor sinners, and use no more means to gain them to Jesus Christ."

Further adding that Jesus Christ had such compassion to sinners when he was upon the earth, that therefore he was called a friend of publicans and sinners.

After some time of silence, he broke out in these words: "O, now I find more in that word than ever I did! 'They overcame by the blood of the Lamb.' Though God hath given me a very tender, good, and affectionate wife, yet I do not grudge to part with her to go to Jesus Christ."

He did bless God that it was not now with him as it was in South-sea Castle, because there he had no friends about him to do any service of love for him, as now he had.

When there was some hope of recovery, his wife asking him whether he would be willing to stay with us if God should restore him, he answered, "I am willing to do what God will have me; but yet unwilling to come back again into the storm."

When his friends endeavoured to keep him from speaking, he said, "You restrain me, and will not let me speak for Jesus Christ;" and then he would weep, and grieve that he was not permitted to speak as much as he would.

When he spoke of sufferings to come, he gave two words of advice to the saints, and those that were round about him, as,

1. To keep all things clear betwixt Christ and the soul, and Christ and the conscience; that there might be no sin to offend Christ, neither in the guilt nor filth of it, nothing espoused to steal away the affections from Christ; but that the soul stand clear in its faith and love, and every grace, and stand loose from the nearest and dearest relations, that so there might be no cause of difference betwixt Christ and the soul.

2. That Christians should be faithful to death; for he that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved.

Another time he expressed himself after this manner: "Sad times will come, and many of them that stand now will fall. Some shall be put into prison, some impover-

ished, some banished, and some put to death, and the saints scattered, so that their differences shall be done away. When they are in their greatest distresses, then the Lord will appear for them, and will save them with a mighty hand."

In his sickness he begged of God that he would please to continue his understanding, in which God did graciously answer him, even to the last, to the admiration of the Doctor.

He did very often and very earnestly press the saints to be of one heart, and to lay aside all their differences.

ELOGY.

VAVASOR POWELL'S ENCOMIUM, OR CHARACTER.

By stock he was of Welsh descent,
In stature mean, yet meek, content.
In holy tongues, and learning, he
Commenced to very great degree ;
Some thirty years to Christ estranged,
And then by grace was call'd and changed ;
He labour'd in Christ's ministry,
And many a soul thereby set free ;
A learned tongue and skill he had
To speak for Christ, to good and bad.
Though to die childless 'twas his lot,
To Christ he many a soul begot.
His parts were quick, yet lowly-minded,
With vain applause not swell'd or winded ;
A man of sorrows, prayers, and tears,
Long suffering under wrongs and jeers ;
Most apt and ready to forget
Affronts, assaults, many and great ;
His labours in his Gospel station
Found universal acceptation.
And though of such we've got so many,
He might as ill be spared as any.
Failings he had ; but where is he
From more and greater, that is free ?

His bonds bespoke him fully known,
 At utter odds with Nimrod's throne ;
 He lay confined, the Oath about,
 Till angels came to fetch him out.
 His glass was run, his bonds death breaks,
 And yet, behold, (though dead,) he speaks.

J. M.

AN EPITAPH UPON THAT FAITHFUL MINISTER, AND
 EMINENT CONFESSOR OF JESUS CHRIST, MR. VA-
 VASOR POWELL.

VAVASOR POWELL.

Lyes here entered, who was a successful teacher of the past, a sincere witness in the present, a choyce example to future ages. For which, he being called to several prisons, was there tryed and found faithful; would not accept deliverance, expecting a better resurrection; in hope of which he finished his life and testimony together, in the 11th year of his imprisonment, and in the 53d of his age, October 27th, 1670.

In vain oppressors do themselves perplex,
 To find out acts how they the saints do vex.
 Death spoyles their plots, and sets the oppressed free :
 Thus Vavasor obtain'd true liberty ;
 Christ him released, and now he is joyn'd among
 The martyr'd souls, with whom he eryes, How long?
 (Dan. xii. 13.)

DATE DUE

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